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HEAVEN

AND ITS

SCRIPTURAL EMBLEMS.

BY

REV. RUFUS W. CLARK.



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TO

MY BELOVED MOTHER,

TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR MY EARLIEST IMPRESSIONS

OF HEAVENLY SCENES,

This Volume

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

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INTRODUCTION.

It is not our purpose, in the following work, to enter upon the discussion of the metaphysical questions which relate to the spiritual world. We propose to view heaven through some of the scriptural emblems of its beauties, and examine a few of the prominent sources of its enjoyments. We would, in company with the Christian reader, ascend the mountains that are round about the New Jerusalem, and from their summits obtain glimpses of its splendors, catch some faint strains of its melody, and indulge the imagination in visions of its joys. We would add a ray to the bright hopes of the departing spirit, add a drop to the cup of consolation which Christianity proffers to the afflicted, and stimulate all believers to press forward towards the mark for the prize of their high calling.

Were we, indeed, disposed or able to penetrate into the mysteries of spiritual existences, we should encounter, at the outset, an insurmountable difficulty, in the inadequacy of human language to express spiritual ideas. All our conceptions being derived from experience and observation, except, perhaps, those of intuitive truths, we can contemplate spiritual

objects only through the medium of images, symbols, or analogies. Even the nicest definitions in theology, and the most abstract terminology, must be presented in figurative language ; and it is more than probable that there is not a single term in our language that had originally a spiritual meaning.

It is true that the Deity has power, independently of the agency of human language, to communicate adequate views of spiritual realities. He can cause to pass before the intellectual vision the bright scenes of the celestial world, — the splendors and joys of glorified saints. But our faculties, in their present state, are as little prepared for the full effulgence of heavenly scenes, as our organs of sight are to receive the light of the stars blazing upon us with the intensity of the sun's rays. In kindness, therefore, God has placed these glories at an immense distance from us, revealing only enough to excite faith, and inspire the heart with hope.

Should, however, a mind be enriched with adequate conceptions of heaven, it would have no power to impart its impressions to others.

It is a deeply interesting fact in the history of our race, that one mind has been thus favored, — has been admitted to the third heaven, and there filled with the most glowing and enrapturing views of celestial felicity. But what the apostle saw and heard it was *impossible* for him to utter. The scenes he could not describe, though he felt intensely their power. The bright visions floated in his imagination through life, keeping ever alive in his heart “a desire to depart.”

To what extent the material world represents the spiritual, we cannot accurately determine, though it is the opinion of some eminent writers that the analogy between the two is very striking. "Holy Scripture," says one, "in fact, is only a gradual unrolling, or spiritualizing to us, of figures and forms that envelop and represent the deeper truths of the spiritual life."

This idea filled the soul of Milton, when he wrote,

"What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein,
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?"

Another has beautifully said, "I have often thought that flowers were the alphabet of angels, whereby they write, on hills and fields, mysterious truths, which it is not given our fallen nature to understand."

Why may we not extend this idea, and regard all the objects around and above us, — all that is beautiful in the sky, clouds, verdure and landscape, — as constituting a language which teaches us, though imperfectly, spiritual truths, and reveals, though faintly, the glories of the heavenly world? It certainly must aid the devotions of the Christian, and solace him in his pilgrimage, to look up, and see hung around the visible universe pictures of the invisible, — to listen to the stars, as they softly yet eloquently declare the glory of God. It must increase his faith to view the decorations of this great temple, as the types and shadows of a new dispensation, and of a loftier and more spiritual worship.

The duty of studying the intimations of Heaven, that have come to us through nature or revelation, rests upon every Christian. Amid the practical schemes and intense activity of the present day, there is but little calm meditation. The spirit is not at rest long enough to reflect with accuracy the mansions and palaces of the celestial city. It is more like a turbulent stream than a smooth lake.

If we are heirs to a vast and splendid inheritance, if we are cherishing the hope of spending an eternity amid the felicities and glories of a spiritual kingdom, it is but reasonable that we meditate upon them ere our departure thither.

Not content with being in the outer court, we should seek, under the Spirit's guidance, to enter the Holy of holies, and there sweetly commune with our Father, in whose presence "there is fulness of joy," — at whose "right hand there are pleasures forevermore."

EMBLEMS OF HEAVEN.

I.

EVIDENCES OF A FUTURE LIFE.

“If a man die shall he live again?” — JOB XIV. 14.

THIS question lies at the basis of all our views of the heavenly world, and is one of infinite moment to every thinking being.

It enters into our ethical investigations, theological opinions, and religious hopes. Let us prove that there is no existence beyond the grave, and we convert all earthly realities into shadows, destroy the highest stimulus to virtue, throw into inexplicable confusion the plans of the Creator, shroud death in impenetrable darkness, and the grave in indescribable gloom. We abandon the long chain of events and achievements in the world's history to the control of chance, or the caprice of a mysterious Deity ; and leave, at last, the wreck of a world to swing in its silent orbit, with no traces remaining of the severe conflicts and splendid victories, of which it had been the theatre.

On the other hand, prove that if a man die he shall live again, and we give precision and certainty to our religious views, and clothe with vast importance the actions, speech and thoughts, of every moment of this passing life. We connect time with eternity as by a thousand electric cords, through which influences are passing and repassing, that affect both worlds, and reach even the throne of the Deity.

Such, indeed, is the vital connection between all truths, natural and revealed, scientific and ethical, that arguments in favor of one, strengthen the whole. Evidences that substantiate the doctrine of the future life, give additional force to the divine government, majesty to the divine character, authority to the claims of Christianity. They clothe with increased solemnity the sanctions of God's law, and give to the soul a value, that the riches and kingdoms of a universe cannot express. A discovery in science, even, sheds its influence over the whole system of moral truth, and is a chapter in that new, or third book of revelation, that a progressive civilization is opening to the world. The light of one truth is reflected by others, and the brightness of the whole constellation is increased by every new star that appears in the firmament.

The mere possibility of a future life, with which the present is connected, should awaken the anxieties and arouse the powers of every sentient being. The

possibility that this is the seed time of a future measureless harvest, — that our mission here is to give coloring and character to an immortal state, — should secure for the themes before us the most serious attention.

The doctrine of a future state may be argued from *the natural phenomena of the physical world, the constitution of the human mind, and from the character and designs of the Deity, as revealed in his providence and word.*

It will not be necessary, in order to show that the soul will survive the body, to prove its immateriality. The same omnipotent power that created mind can preserve it in being, whatever may be the constituent elements of which it is composed. Besides, we have no more evidence of the destruction of matter, than of the destruction of mind. All the phenomena in the natural world show that matter, in undergoing its various transformations and changes, loses none of its particles. It may be decomposed, may enter into a variety of chemical affinities, may be changed from a solid to a liquid, and from a liquid to invisible gases, and yet not an atom be annihilated. Its power thus to survive all changes, and enter into new combinations, under laws that are fixed and unalterable; its capability of resisting all the forces that can be brought against it, shows that its properties are subtile agents, or

elements distinct from mere extension, solidity, &c., — elements that, for aught we know, cling as tenaciously to life, as those of an immaterial substance.

To pass by more common illustrations, we would refer to the changes which so solid a substance as silver undergoes on being immersed in diluted nitric acid.* The strong affinity of the acid for the silver acts upon it so powerfully as very soon to entirely dissolve it. The fluid remains as clear and limpid as before. Now, what has become of the silver? Is it destroyed? Its form, solidity, lustre, and all its metallic characteristics, are gone. Its existence is not appreciable by any of the senses; and were we ignorant of the method of restoring it to its metallic state, or of discovering by certain tests its presence in the fluid, we should suppose that it was annihilated. And were a class of objectors disposed to maintain this position, and adduce the evidences of their senses that the metal was absolutely destroyed, we should have no means of refuting them. But our knowledge of chemistry enables us to introduce a substance into the mixture that will compel the acid to surrender up the silver, and the small particles may be gathered up,

* See Bakewell's "Natural Evidences of a Future Life, derived from the Properties, &c. of Matter," a work in which this branch of our subject is discussed with great ability.

and restored even to the same form, that the substance presented before its dissolution.

So we may take water, and resolve it into two substances that bear no resemblance to the original, — hydrogen and oxygen gases. We may bring the two, thus separated, into contact with fire, that is extinguished by water, and the one is found to be a supporter of combustion, and the other burns with an intense and steady flame. Reünited, they again form water.

A piece of coal, in undergoing the process of combustion, is simply resolved into its primitive elements, — caloric, gas, smoke, and ashes ; and could these be collected together again and weighed, they would be found to correspond exactly in weight with the original piece of coal. Vegetation, too, when decomposed, has simply assumed new forms, and entered into new combinations. None of its particles are lost, but they have simply been appointed to other offices, and are at work in other departments of the great laboratory of nature.

Examples of a similar character might be multiplied indefinitely ; and from these various and constant changes in the natural world we would draw, if not a conclusive argument, at least a strong probability, that the immaterial and more valuable part of man will survive the changes that the body undergoes at death.

It is true that we are incapable of conceiving, with our present faculties, how the sentient principle within us can exist, detached from a bodily organization; and we allow, that the evidences of the external senses, in viewing the phenomena of death, favor the idea that all that was vital in the prostrate form is forever extinguished. But when we witness changes in material substances more marked and surprising than those wrought by death upon a human being, without destroying a single particle of matter, — when we see the most wonderful transformations taking place, as, for instance, gases converted into solids, and solids into gases, without the loss of a single ingredient, — we may reasonably believe that a dissolution may take place between the body and the mind, without the destruction of either. And if we are unable to trace out the processes in the natural world, by means of which these changes are effected, — if we cannot see and explain how the two gases that compose water separate from each other, and become combustible, invisible, and noxious, while in combination they were visible and salubrious, — our ignorance does not militate against the fact that such changes do take place. Neither should our ignorance of the manner in which mind is preserved when separated from the body, destroy our faith in the fact that it is preserved. Our inability to

explain the manner in which the separation takes place, and each part exists as a distinct entity, is certainly no proof that it cannot be explained. The Being who created the human soul, and united it to a material body, has power to sustain it when detached from that body; and if all experience teaches us that matter is imperishable, a higher experience may teach us that mind is imperishable.

But the natural world furnishes another analogy that is worthy of attention.

We find that there are properties inherent in matter, such as chemical attraction and gravitation, which, though so subtile as to defeat every effort to ascertain their nature, yet are not destroyed nor affected by the changes that take place in the bodies in which they are found. Let these bodies be decomposed, or resolved into their primitive elements, and still these properties will not be annihilated; thus furnishing, at least, a striking analogy to the continued existence of the spiritual nature of man, after his physical organization has been reduced to its native dust. That most subtile and mysterious element, heat, that so generally pervades matter, and may, perhaps, be regarded as a distinct essence, can be proved to be indestructible. A large class of experiments might be brought forward to show that it cannot be annihilated, and that in being brought from a latent into an active state, it diffuses itself

abroad, and passes to other bodies. The same is true of other elements. No satisfactory evidence can be adduced that the least portion of them is ever destroyed.

We now ascend to a higher class of evidences in favor of the future life, drawn from *the constitution, desires, and moral qualities of the human intellect.*

A simple glance at the powers of the mind, — its capacities, store-houses of memory, range of thought, taste, refinement, capabilities of happiness, and exquisite organization, — affords strong presumptive evidence that it was not made to perish with the body. So wonderful a structure, animating this living material organization, connected with all external structures, — with the earth, sun, and stars; — so godlike a substance, — united to the great God, soaring for companionship with angels, capable of loving and adoring the Supreme Being, — could not have been made to sport here for a while, amid an ocean of mysteries and uncertainties, to be at last flung, as a worthless wreck, upon the shores of eternity.

The very contrast exhibited between the human intellect and its comparatively limited sphere here, — between its capabilities and their actual development, between its desires and their gratification, — indicates that it is designed for a higher life, and nobler theatre. In looking around us, we find that

all other objects and classes of beings are fitted to the ends for which they were created. The flowers that bloom, the animals that roam in the fields, and the insects that sport in the sunlight, are all fulfilling their destiny. But man stands alone upon this planet, — an anomaly, a mystery. He is a stranger here. He burns with desires after knowledge and truth, which must be restrained. He is conscious of struggling powers, earnest aspirations; but they are clogged, fettered. He looks upward, and sees signal stars hung out over the canopy, indicating that there are vast domains beyond his narrow habitation, — domains that he would rejoice to explore, — worlds that he thirsts to know about. As he gazes, a thousand conjectures throng his mind: Are these false lights designed to deceive, or only to light up the wastes of an infinite expanse, or do they illumine millions of attendant worlds? He asks, are they inhabited? Does the same divine government that we are under, extend over them? Are the subjects loyal, or rebels, like us? Do they know what death is? Do they need a Saviour? Have they ever heard the thunder of divine wrath, or watched the flash of their Creator's indignant eye? What is their organization? — what their susceptibilities, intellectual endowments, moral characteristics, hopes, fears, joys, or sorrows? The stranger asks, but no response is heard. He goes to the

most profound philosophers, but they can tell him nothing satisfactory. He goes to the most successful astronomers, but they can give him only conjectures. He consults the Book of books, but he finds that that treats of but one science.

The intensity of this desire after knowledge, — this longing to study the map and traverse the empire of the universe, — is indicated in the excitement and warm enthusiasm with which important astronomical discoveries are received. Let it be announced that by means of vastly increased telescopic power, cities and inhabitants had been discovered on the nearest planet; that the glitter of its palaces, and the magnificence of its architecture, and the movements of its busy throng, had been seen, — with what rapidity would the tidings fly over the civilized world! With what greediness would the news be received! But those distant suns, planets, and moons are all silent. They declare only “the glory of God.” They teach but one lesson, and that is, that from far nobler heights than this earth can furnish we shall view their splendors and read their destiny. Else this language above us is a forgery. And can the finger of God write, in such bright characters, forgery? I tremble in uttering even the suspicion. I believe in a God who cannot lie, — in a Father who will not deceive. I ask from yonder stars no other voices. They tell

me enough. Faith can build beyond the boundaries of sight.

But distinct from this thirsting after knowledge is the inherent love of existence, and desire for immortality, that is in every breast. Notwithstanding all our disappointments and calamities here, we still cling tenaciously to life. We love to be. We love to feel the glow of health, and the vigorous workings of our intellectual nature. We love to look out upon the broad earth, breathe the fresh air, drink in the sunlight, listen to the music of birds and forests, and float quietly on this green ball through the skies. We love, far from the noise and strife of men, to commune with our own spirits and with the Great Spirit.

“ Deep solitude I sought. There was a dell
Where woven shades shut out the eye of day,
While, towering near, the rugged mountains made
Dark back-ground 'gainst the sky. Thither I went,
And bade my spirit drink that lovely draught
For which it long had languished, 'mid the strife
And fever of the world. I thought to be
There without witness, but the violet's eye
Looked up upon me, the fresh wild rose smiled,
And the young pendent vine-flower kissed my cheek.
And there were voices, too. The garrulous brook,
Untiring, to the patient pebbles told
Its history. Up came the singing breeze,
And the broad leaves of the cool poplar spoke,
Responsive, every one.” * * *

The thought of losing this conscious life, of having

this bright flame go out, and existence buried down deep in the grave of endless night, is appalling. The mere possibility of annihilation, to a sensitive spirit, to a heart gushing with affection, to a mind filled with pure desires and noble aspirations, is horrible. Even with the revealed promise of a life to come, we shrink from the hazards of the grave. We fear to close our eyes in death, lest they may never open again. We fear to cast off the last rope that holds us to the shore of time, lest some unknown storm may engulf us in the ocean of annihilation.

And when the dread certainty is fastened upon us that we must die, our desires and hopes leap the dark valley, and land amid the imagined felicities of an immortal state. The evidences of the future life, in such an hour, throng the mind, and strive to buoy it up, as it is sinking into the dark waters of death.

This longing after immortality, — this stretching away after the infinite, — is inherent in every mind that is not shattered or debased by sin. It appears in the want of satisfaction, that one feels, when in the possession of the highest earthly good. The greatest degree of power, knowledge, wealth, or pleasure, cannot afford to the mind lasting and solid enjoyment. The king upon his throne strives for new territories, larger revenues, and more exclusive

prerogatives. The most gifted and profound philosopher uses his acquisitions and mental discipline, to effect new conquests in the kingdom of science. The man of wealth thirsts for greater riches, and, too often, his gains are only fuel to feed the flame of his avarice.

These restless, burning desires pervade all nations, and all ranks in society. They constitute a part of man's being, and can only be extinguished by destroying the principle of life ; and as one increases in intellectual attainment and moral excellence, his desire for immortality increases in the same proportion. Among the heathen, the earliest and most zealous advocates of this doctrine were illustrious poets, philosophers, and statesmen. Xenocrates, Plato, Demosthenes, and others, strongly advocated it ; and as they advanced in intelligence and virtue the fear of death was removed.

The early martyrs, as they rose in religious fervor, rose in contempt of death. Persecutions, prisons, bodily tortures, they heeded not, for they desired "a better country," — a more splendid theatre for the development of their powers, and the display of their loyalty and devotion.

Now, how shall we account for the universality and intensity of this desire for a future life ? Why is it that the mind of man, upon which the Deity lavishes such rich blessings, — before which he opens

such a variety of moral, intellectual, and social enjoyments, — yet remains unsatisfied, yet cherishes

“ this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality ? ”

Can we doubt the source of this desire ? And if planted in the breast by the Creator, can we suppose that it was placed there without design, or with the intention of exciting in us hopes which will never be realized ? Does it comport with our ideas of the divine benevolence, wisdom, and rectitude, to imagine for a moment that minds freighted with such hopes are destined to be annihilated, — destined to plunge over the precipice, into the deep, bottomless gulf, from which we instinctively recoil with horror ?

The moral qualities of the soul also indicate its immortality. Man is constituted to feel and act, as well as to think. He is endowed with certain instincts, affections, and principles, that prompt him to seek his own moral culture, and the improvement of his fellow-men. Amid the evidences of a sad degeneracy, and wide-spread moral debasement, with which the world is filled, we find numerous instances of heroism, benevolence, and philanthropy, that excite our admiration and reflect honor upon human nature. Men have lived who were noble specimens of the race, — men of exalted virtues,

strong fortitude, invincible courage, boundless usefulness. They have appeared upon the stage to redeem human nature, to show that principle can triumph over self-interest, that the good of society can be toiled for, without the hope of earthly reward, and that a life can be regulated by the law of kindness, and devoted to acts of generosity and charity.

We might point, for example, to the heroes of the Christian church, who have furnished the world with most illustrious examples of patient endurance under suffering ; of boldness and zeal in maintaining the truth, in the face of the bitterest opposition ; of a resolute determination to break up those giant systems of evil that had so long crushed the nations. In the early efforts of apostles and martyrs to establish Christianity upon an imperishable basis, we have a scene of moral sublimity upon which the good and virtuous of all ages delight to gaze. We have an exhibition of qualities of heart and soul, calculated to quicken the energies and fire the zeal of every beholder. And the effects of those labors and sacrifices have been felt down to the present hour ; nay, more ; their influence has been deepening and widening, flowing through the ramifications of society, touching the springs of action in thousands of hearts, aiding millions in sustaining the shock of life's battle, giving birth to institutions that are blessing the civilized world.

Now, can we entertain the thought that these minds, that had attained to such an eminence in moral excellence, religious devotion, and godlike usefulness, have perished? Were they, through long disciplinary processes, through fire, dungeons, and torture, carried to such a noble height that they might fall thence into annihilation? Is there, in this wide universe, no other field for the exercise of their benevolence, courage, heroism? Is the Creator so limited in his power and resources that he can carry a human being no further than to the door of the tomb? Is death so mighty an agent as to dispute dominion with the Infinite One? Is there given to a single mind, a single earnest apostle, the power of illuminating, by the brightness of his example, the civilized world, causing its light to be reflected from a thousand pulpits and thousands of presses, furnishing themes for the most persuasive eloquence, and stimulus for the most elevated piety, while that mind itself is left to perish? Shall the influence be "clothed with immortality," while the source of the influence goes down into annihilation?

There is a still higher class of evidences of the future life.

All men are impressed, to a greater or less degree, with the fact that they are the subjects of a divine moral government. Their reason, con-

science, and experience, teach them this truth. The idea that we are under authority, — that we owe allegiance to a higher power, — is developed in the mind of a child, and grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength. The approbation that we feel in view of right conduct, and the disapprobation that is produced by wrong conduct, — the rewards that accompany virtue, and the evils that follow vice, — all keep this idea of government before the mind. Not only is it taught through God's providential dealings, but there is placed in every soul a viceroy of heaven's King, — a principle termed conscience, — that acts as a faithful sentinel over our moral interests. If a person follows a vicious course of life, it is not necessary for him to be summoned before an external tribunal, in order to have his case examined, and sentence pronounced. There is inherent in his own soul, a power that brings him into the court of his own consciousness, impanels a jury from his own sense of justice and propriety, compels him to hear witnesses before conscience, which sits as judge, and requires him to listen to the sentence of condemnation, and experience its execution in impaired health, waste of character, ruined prospects, and blasted hopes. He carries about with him this miniature moral government wherever he goes. He cannot shake it off. He cannot divest himself of its authority, nor flee

from its sanctions. And what is it but a reflection of that great moral government that the Supreme Being has instituted over all his sentient creatures? What does it teach, but that we must one day render an account before a more august tribunal, and in the presence of a more terrible Judge? Connected with this idea of government, is the idea that this is a disciplinary state, — that we are placed here to form characters and acquire habits for a higher life. In passing through the severe ordeal of temptation, in being subject to heavy trials and afflictions, we cannot suppose that the benefits accruing therefrom are confined to this short life. All the influences with which we are brought in contact here, seem to have an educational purpose. They bid us look upward, — bid us make preparation for the future.

While we have abundant evidence of the perfection of this divine government, we have also evidence that it is here imperfectly administered, and that the ends of strict justice are not always attained. The virtuous often suffer unjustly, — are oppressed, persecuted, and deeply injured, with no means of redress. On the other hand, tyrants often seem, for a series of years, to prosper in their tyranny. They are not always smitten down at once by the judgments of Heaven. They retain their power, amass wealth, revel in luxuries, while their virtuous, perhaps Christian victims, are pining in dun-

geons or burning at stakes. Now, without a future life, there are deep mysteries here that we cannot solve; — there are perplexities here that we cannot reconcile with divine justice and benevolence.

But convince me that there is a future life, where villanous persecutors and infamous tyrants will receive the punishment due to their crimes, and where the virtuous and holy will be rewarded, and these difficulties are at once removed.

The question, however, of a future state of being, has been settled by Him who brought life and immortality to light. The Great Teacher sent from God has laid before us an array of evidences that removes every doubt, and inspires us with the strongest faith and most brilliant hopes. Appearing upon the theatre of human action, he unrolls his credentials for the inspection of mankind. By his accurate fulfilment of prophecy, his power to work miracles, his holy life, and his readiness to suffer and die for man, he has substantiated his claim to our unlimited confidence; and when he declares, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never die,” we recognize in the words, the most sublime announcement ever made to man. We recognize the language of a messenger who speaks as “one having authority.”

Indeed, the Holy Scriptures abound with proofs of our immortality. Every page is luminous with

this great doctrine. From the hopes of the patriarch Abraham, who “looked for a city that had foundation, whose builder and maker is God,” down to the splendid revelations made to St. John, we have a series of proofs that no scepticism can undermine, nor opposition overthrow. Moses, in the fullness of his faith, “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Job, in the midst of his adversity, could say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” The Psalmist David declared, “As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” All these ancient saints “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” and that they “desired a better country, even an heavenly.”

The evangelists and apostles glowed with the rapture imparted by this great doctrine. Hear the dying words of the most earnest and noble of these heroes: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”

We cannot sum up the scriptural presentation of this truth in words more appropriate and sublime than those used by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians: “Behold, I show you a mystery.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality !”

“ O, listen, man !

A voice within us speaks that startling word,
‘ Man, thou shalt never die ! ’ Celestial voices
Hymn it unto our souls ; according harps,
By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars
Of morning sang together, sound forth still
The song of our great immortality ;
Thick clustering orbs, and this our fair domain,
The tall, dark mountains, and the deep-toned seas,
Join in this solemn, universal song.
O, listen, ye, our spirits ; drink it in
From all the air ! ’Tis in the gentle moonlight ;
’Tis floating ’midst day’s setting glories ; night,
Wrapped in her sable robe, with silent step
Comes to our bed, and breathes it in our ears.
Night, and the dawn, bright day, and thoughtful eve
All time, all bounds, the limitless expanse,
As one vast mystic instrument, are touched
By an unseen, living Hand, and conscious chords
Quiver with joy in this great jubilee.
The dying hear it, and, as sounds of earth
Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls
To mingle in this heavenly harmony.”

II.

THE RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE.

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne.” — REVELATION IV. 3.

No portion of the Bible is so fruitful in heavenly emblems as the book of Revelation. They cluster and sparkle upon every page. They adorn every vision, and glisten from every truth which is recorded by the beloved disciple. As though conscious that the inspired volume is about to close, they crowd around the setting sun to receive its last beauteous rays, and throw their splendors over the whole heavens.

The isle of Patmos, where this panorama of gorgeous images passed before the mind of St. John, presented a striking contrast to the scenes of which it was the theatre. It was a lonely, barren spot in the Ægean Sea, so desolate that criminals were sent to it as a punishment. Domitian, the tyrant, banished thither the Apostle John, thinking that the wildness and hardships of the place would induce him to renounce his religion. But his faith and devotion, instead of becoming weaker, kindled into a glow that pervaded his whole being. He felt that

God was with him, that the Holy Spirit was hovering over him, that Jesus was his companion, and that angelic messengers were encamped round about him. Those rough cliffs and cragged rocks, were clothed with freshness and beauty to his eye. The ocean that begirt his isle spread out as the emblem of infinite love. Its roar was sweet music to his ear, as he recognized in it notes of that great anthem that is constantly ascending from nature to its God.

The heavenly scenes, however, that he witnessed, shed over the island a bright halo of glory. As he looked upward, he beheld the whole canopy filled with images of surpassing beauty and splendor. In the distance, there appeared a throne, and one sat upon it "like unto the Son of Man." His robes were of snowy whiteness. His countenance shone as the sun. Upon his brow rested a brilliant crown. Around the throne there was "a great multitude, that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

Other scenes, of equal grandeur, open one after another, illustrating the power of the church, the progress of Christ's kingdom, and the signal ruin of its enemies. The New Jerusalem appears in the vision, with its streets of gold, its gates of pearl, its towers and palaces, and gorgeous decorations.

But it is to a single object in this celestial panorama, that we would now direct our attention ; and that is, the rainbow that was round about the throne. There is a significancy in this into which it may be well to inquire. Why did not the holy divine behold over such a throne, the radiance of brilliant stars, or the splendor of a noonday's sun ? Why does there appear a simple rainbow ? We answer.

It is placed there as the token, that a covenant-keeping God is seated upon that throne. After Noah and his family had witnessed the fearful ravages and escaped the perils of the deluge, God said to him, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for the token of a covenant between me and the earth ; and I will remember my covenant, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." In this solemn pledge we have shadowed forth the spiritual covenant which God has entered into with his church, — a covenant that he will not flood the earth with divine wrath, but will receive to his favor the penitent and believing. As the ancient dispensation, under Moses, with its rites and ceremonies, stood as the type of a new and spiritual system, so the bow that Noah saw in the cloud, was the type of that more resplendent arch that appeared in the vision of John ; and as God has been faithful in fulfilling his promise to spare the world from the disasters of another deluge, he

will be equally faithful in fulfilling all the precious promises, which he has made to his people. And this bow around the throne is to inspire confidence, as well as hope,—to give to the Christian pilgrim “a full assurance of faith;” to enable him to say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

A special object of Christ’s mission was to impress the world with the truthfulness and faithfulness of Jehovah. “In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.”

Indeed, Christ is presented to us as “the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” Those which were made with Noah, Abraham, and their descendants, pertained to temporal benefits. The Israelites, if obedient to God, were to receive distinguished earthly favors. They were to be in a miraculous manner supplied with food, protected from their enemies, and conducted to a land overflowing with milk and honey. The manifestations which the Deity made of himself to them, were such as appealed to the external senses. They approached “a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire;” they heard “the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words.” “But ye,” who are under the new covenant, “are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.” The

blessings now offered are of a spiritual nature. Instead of manna to support the body, we have precious truths to nourish and invigorate the soul. Instead of waters flowing from a rock, we may drink of "the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Instead of following a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, a divine, resplendent Being appears before us, saying, "I am the light of the world." Instead of a mountain that might be touched, — a mountain enveloped in clouds and darkness, shaken by peals of thunder, and rendered terrible by flashes of lightning, — we "are come unto Mount Zion," whose mild beauties attract every beholder, and around whose summit play the soft beams from the Sun of righteousness. Instead of a material city, we have pointed out to us, in the far distance, "the heavenly Jerusalem," with its sweet gardens, celestial palaces and thrones, — "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Instead of being confined to the society of imperfect men, we are admitted to companionship with angels, — to "the general assembly and church of the first born." Indeed, all that the Christian can desire in this life, or hope for in the next, is pledged under this new and better covenant. No language can describe, no imagination can portray, the rich blessings which it secures

to the believer. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

How appropriate, then, that the throne of the Eternal should be arched over with the bow of promise, that the Christian should have before him this perpetual token, that a covenant-keeping God holds the reins of universal dominion! How full of comfort to the saint, that the eye of faith may rest upon that bow! No sun is there, to dazzle the vision; no storm-cloud, with its rolling thunder and lightning flashes, overhangs the throne, to terrify those who approach it; but a rainbow, with its beautiful tints and soft rays, attracts them, inspiring in their hearts, confidence and hope. The oppressed pilgrim may look upon it, and from the throne he hears the words, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Penitent prodigals, weary with toil, having found the ways of transgressors hard, may turn towards it an anxious eye, and they hear the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The dying Christian, as earthly scenes are fading from the view, may behold it, and exclaim, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

This bow, however, does not stand alone, as a proof of the divine faithfulness. Our pathway through life is scattered with evidences of a Heavenly Father’s care. His bounteous supply of our wants; his regard for life, in providing food, for the intellect, in furnishing knowledge; for the taste, in decorating so beautifully this globe, that is floating us through the heavens; his providential care, in guarding us from injury, in keeping the delicate and complicated workmanship of the human system in tune so long, are all proofs that our future interests will be protected. We reason justly, from this life to another; from what we see around us, and experience here, to what we may expect in a higher and nobler state of being. This is our school, to which we are sent to learn lessons of God’s truthfulness and love. We are here taught to have faith in our great Benefactor, and to trust him for the blessings of another life, because he has done so much for us in this.

The bow around the throne is also a token that the storms of human life shall ere long pass away.

After a severe tempest, during which the raging elements have threatened to destroy every object within their reach, and the heavy crashes of thunder have appalled the stoutest heart, we have

experienced the relief afforded by the subsiding of the storm, and seeing painted on the retiring clouds the bow of promise. As we looked abroad, instead of witnessing the marks of ruin, nature has appeared clothed in its loveliest hues, as though to mock the fury of the tempest. From the descending torrents it has gathered refreshment and vigor, and even the lightning has done it a service, by purifying the atmosphere. Thus the devout Christian sees in the bow around the throne the pledge that the trials and afflictions of life shall soon end, and perfect serenity be his portion. He reads inscribed upon it, in golden letters, the words, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God."

But the hour for this rest has not yet come. The benefits of trials must first be gathered into the soul. The heart must be disciplined; faith must be cultivated; the power of the soul's endurance must be tested. It is not the design of God that the Christian

"should be carried to the skies

On flowery beds of ease."

He must "strive to enter in at the strait gate." He must "run with patience the race set before him." He must "fight the good fight of faith." All the scriptural expressions upon this point imply the necessity of earnest effort. The battle must

be fought before the triumph is celebrated. A great work must be accomplished in self-discipline, — in the development and growth of holy principles, — ere we are prepared for the rewards of heaven. In all the temptations and afflictions of life, the design of the Creator is discernible, and he has arched his throne with a beautiful rainbow, to assure his people that he will give peace to the troubled soul. And this bow is over the throne to indicate that it is only when the Christian is near this throne, that he can enjoy perfect serenity. He must, as it were, enter into God, dwell amid his holy attributes, experience the fulness of his love, if he would enjoy that peace “that passeth all understanding.” That far-distant height storms never reach. Clouds that cast shadows upon the earth float beneath it. The passions and strifes of wicked men do not ascend to it.

“ There faith lifts up the tearless eye,
The heart with anguish riven ;
It views the tempest passing by,
Sees evening shadows quickly fly,
And all serene in heaven.”

There is infinite wisdom displayed in thus making the throne the seat of perfect peace ; for, had we satisfying enjoyment here, we should become too much attached to the world. As it now is, we are loath to leave it. Amid all our trials and disap-

pointments, its charms continue to fascinate us. Its cares absorb the attention. We seek its riches, covet its applause, and depend upon its pleasures. Though we term human life a vale of tears, we are often reluctant to exchange it for Mount Zion, — for the city of the living God. Though friends here are sometimes false, many receive with alarm the summons to mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first born. Though in this world the Christian has tribulation, he trembles at the thought of entering into the presence of God, where the Psalmist assures us “there is fulness of joy.”

It is therefore a wise provision that so many attractions cluster around the throne. It is a great kindness in the Supreme Father to draw away his children from the vanities of time, and fasten their attention upon the joys and splendors of immortality.

The rainbow encircling the throne indicates, also, that there is ample power to confer and perpetuate this happiness. A throne is the emblem of strength and authority. Hence, it is not simply a Father, who promises to the Christian, peace; — it is a Sovereign, — one “who doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.” The resources of God’s boundless empire are to be employed in executing his pur-

poses of love. The vast revenues that flow into his treasury, are to be used in enriching and blessing his people. Those glorious, divine attributes, that built the universe, and peopled the millions of worlds that float in space, are to be exercised in promoting the happiness of the righteous. With what inexpressible joy will the redeemed saint approach the throne, and view his rich and everlasting inheritance ! With what rapture will he gaze upon the splendid manifestations which the Deity will make of himself, in his celestial kingdom !

“It is,” says one, “a glorious thing, even, when the golden beams of day flood the canopy of heaven, and forest, mountain and river, are beautiful with light ; — glorious, indeed, when the whole creation wakes up at the summons of the morning, as though the trumpet had sounded, and the vast grave of night were giving back the cities and solitudes that had gone down into its recesses. But in place of a firmament lighted up with a material body, we shall have the infinite vault converted into one brilliant manifestation of Deity ; the splendid coruscations of righteousness, truth and love, weaving themselves together to form the arch ; and the Deity glowing through immeasurable space, and pouring his own lustre upon every object, and thus making the universe a reflection of his own glory.”

The rainbow around the throne is significant in

another aspect. As the bow upon the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so this may be said to be formed, by the union of mercy and justice. As an arch reaching to heaven, it sustains the divine government; and its extremes, descending and resting upon the earth, show that divine mercy extends to man. Were only the justice of the Deity revealed, we should continually hear the thunders of the law, and tremble before the terrors of its awful penalty. Were God only merciful, there would be no efficiency in his government, and no stability in his throne. But it is the mingling of the two that inspires us with confidence in the divine character, and secures to the obedient subject the rich rewards of his kingdom. Mercy invites us to enter heaven; justice protects us in our rights and privileges, after we have entered. Mercy opens the gates of the heavenly city; justice stands at the entrance, and demands holiness of character, in all those who would see God. Were justice destroyed, and the divine mercy of such a nature as to admit the whole race to heaven, irrespective of qualifications or character, there could be no order or happiness in God's moral kingdom. The happiness of a sentient being is not produced by the locality that he occupies. It flows from the inward sentiments, from the conduct, and character. It may be enjoyed in a higher degree in a prison than in a

palace, — on a solitary, barren island, than amid the luxuries and splendors of the most brilliant earthly court. Heaven might, indeed, be thrown open, unconditionally, to all mankind, without requiring of any repentance, faith, or love to God ; but such a measure would not secure their salvation.

The only salvation worthy of the name is that which saves man from sin, — from that which is the cause of his misery. He is the victim of a moral disease, and must apply for a remedy to the great Physician. His soul, originally designed as the temple of the living God, is shattered. Its columns are broken, its walls have crumbled, its altar is overthrown, its worship is suspended. It must therefore be rebuilt, and become a fit receptacle for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The voice of penitential prayer must be heard within its walls. To the altar must be brought the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

No, the Bible does not teach us that justice is annihilated because the sceptre of mercy is extended. The Deity has not laid aside his sovereignty by becoming a Redeemer. The laws proclaimed on Mount Sinai are not annulled by the love displayed on Calvary. Notwithstanding the ample provisions of the scheme of redemption, man is distinctly taught that he has duties to perform, as well as

hopes to entertain. The proclamation made to all men is, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" — with fear, lest ye fail of the great salvation; with trembling, lest ye are startled, at last, by the utterance, "Depart, for I never knew you."

In the eloquent language of another, we would say to all, "Strive; for the grasp of the destroyer is upon you, and if ye be not wrenched away, it will palsy you and crush you. Strive; for the foe is on the right hand, on the left hand, before you, behind you, and ye must be trampled under foot if ye struggle not and strike not as those who feel themselves bound in a death-grapple. Strive; there is a crown to be won. The mines of the earth have not furnished its metal, and the depths of the sea hide nothing so radiant as the jewels with which it is wreathed. Strive, then, in the strength of your risen Lord, and not in your own. Ye know not how soon that Lord may come. Whilst the sun walks his usual path on the firmament, and the grass is springing in our fields, and merchants are crowding the exchange, and the avaricious counting gold, 'the sign of the Son of Man' shall be seen in the heavens, and the august throne, of fire and of cloud, be piled for judgment."

God grant that we may stand before that throne

with the consciousness of sins pardoned, — that we may look upon the bow around it as one of promise to us, and that under its beauteous light we may be guided to mansions in the skies!

How delightful to the Christian to think of the departed saints as having already passed under that bow, and received the welcome and blessing of a covenant-keeping God! Especially in the silence of night, when the stillness of the hour incites to meditation, do we love to think of our friends as having entered the bright mansions above. The stars seem to tell us of their homes and their happiness. Under the influence of such meditations, the following verses evidently were written:

“ Who ever looked upon yon starry spheres,
Which brightly shine from out the dark-blue sky,
Nor called to mind the friends of other years,
The hopes, the joys, the transient smiles and tears,
Gushing from out where buried memories lie,
And waking the full heart to highest ecstasy?

O, what a glorious vision, when the moon,
Silently gliding through her pathless way,
Has reached the extremest point of her high noon,
Shedding o’er this our earth her radiant boon,
While twinkling stars, and orbs of steadier ray,
Shine with a light that mocks the intenser glare of day!

O, who has ever gazed on such a scene,
Nor thought the spirits of the blest were there?
Who, that beholds not in that blue serene
Bright isles, the abode of pleasures yet unseen,

Except by those who, freed from mortal care,
Have winged their raptured flight to realms of upper air?

The mother, who has watched with sleepless eye
Her babe, and rocked with tireless foot the while,
And when she saw the little sufferer die,
Bowed her meek head, and wept in agony,
Fancies she hears, in yonder starry isle,
Her little cherub's voice, and sees his angel smile.

O, ye departed spirits of my sires,
And ye, the loved ones of my childhood's days,
While now I look on yonder heavenly fires,
Methinks I hear you tune your seraph lyres,
Methinks I see you bend your pitying gaze
On him who still must tread alone earth's gloomy maze!

Thou angel spirit, who so oft didst sing
My infant cares to sleep upon thy breast,
Let me but hear the rustling of thy wing,
Around thy child its guardian influence fling!
O, come thou from the island of the blest,
And bear my weary soul up to thy sainted rest!

Can we forget departed friends? Ah, no!
Within our hearts their memory buried lies;
The thought that where they are we too shall go
Will cast a light o'er darkest scenes of woe;
For to their own blest dwellings in the skies
The souls whom Christ sets free exultingly shall rise!"

III.

A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

“O, that I had wings like a dove ! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.” — PSALM LV. 6.

“There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God.” — HEBREWS IV. 9.

WE have, in these two passages, a wish and a promise ; the one indicative of man's restlessness here, the other affording an assurance of his repose hereafter. It is the lot of all mortals to be dissatisfied. Our desires and attainments do not correspond. The ambitious man, who has reached certain heights of power, eagerly strains his vision towards loftier positions. The covetous man uses his wealth as fuel to feed the flame of his avarice. The scholar is stimulated, not satisfied, with his acquirements. His desire to know increases with his knowledge. His discoveries he uses as torch-lights with which to explore yet darker and more obscure regions.

The monarch upon the throne of Israel, with all his wisdom, the power of his armies, the splendors of his reign, was not at rest. An humble subject, passing by, to his daily labor, the walls of his palace, and gazing upon the costly architecture, would

naturally envy the fortunate occupant. As he heard the music of his players, and the songs of his choirs, he would feel that here there was positive and satisfying enjoyment. And as, at night, in his cottage, he reads the soothing and beautiful verses of the Hebrew poet, and drinks in their inspiration, he exclaims, "Happy, thrice happy monarch!"

But what says the royal Psalmist himself?—"Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. O, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." As the timid dove, startled by the howling wind, hastens, before the dark cloud, to the wilderness for shelter, so would the envied monarch leave behind him honor, royalty and his kingdom, and fly to the desert to obtain rest.

Had he been, however, permitted to retire from office and authority, and resume his early occupation as a shepherd,—had he exchanged the splendors of royalty for the simplicity of rural life, the responsibilities of a magnificent sovereignty for the care of a flock,—would he have found satisfying repose? Would no enemies have troubled him in the wilderness, no quarrels vexed him, no calamities befallen him? Would no midnight howl from wild beasts,

eager for prey, have disturbed his slumbers? And, though secure from all outward misfortunes, would he have had nothing to fear from the reproaches of conscience, the solicitations of evil passions, or the restless desires of unsatisfied affections? The wings of a dove, that bore him to any spot on earth, would not carry him beyond the boundaries of trouble and anxiety. He might reach the wilderness, but he would not find rest. That is not the portion of man here. His circumstances, his nature, his character, forbid it. But “there remaineth a rest to the people of God.” It is above, on heights that earthly storms never reach; near pure rivers, that never swell into destructive torrents; in green pastures, and amid bright flowers that never fade.

Let us contemplate some of the features of this heavenly rest.

I. It is rest for the powers and aspirations of the soul. It does not involve inactivity and cessation from all effort; for such a state would be far from desirable. It is a repose analogous to that which the earnest and diligent philosopher feels, when he has attained, in some satisfactory degree, the object of his researches; or that which the faithful Christian experiences, at the close of an eminently holy and useful life.

The mind rests upon objects worthy of its powers, commensurate with its desires. It enjoys a mental

tranquillity never before experienced ; for in this world there is an abiding consciousness of longings that can never be gratified. The intense thirst of the intellect for knowledge, for truth, for a clear insight into the mysteries of science and religion, cannot be satisfied. The mind is clogged by gross, material objects. The perceptions are dimmed by the mists that are around us. There is, too, the humiliating reflection that we are in a state of banishment from our Father's house, — that we are wanderers in a moral desert, and that the storms of sin have shattered our powers. Though the vital principle is not extinct, — though there are occasional flashes of the fire of genius, that throw their lustre over the intellectual firmament, — yet man is in ruins. His spirit is the sport of a thousand conflicting emotions, baffled plans, and thwarted purposes.

But above there is peace, — “the peace of God that passeth all understanding.” The divine image is reïmpressed upon the soul, and man is restored to his allegiance, his dignity, and his relationship to the Deity. He is received into the presence of the infinite Sovereign, dwells amid his holy attributes, experiences the intensity of his love, is clothed in the robes of royalty. His powers are now in harmonious and vigorous action, and the tide of knowledge flows in upon him, as a pure, sparkling,

refreshing stream. He enjoys the repose of perfect satisfaction. A palace is his home. Angels are his companions and instructors. God is his portion. He feels, as he never felt before, the beauty and soothing influence of the words, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters."

He rests, too, in the bosom of his Saviour; for he has accepted the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He experiences the fulfilment of the promise, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you."

As this language was addressed by Christ to his disciples while he was upon the earth, we might inquire, What peace could come from a heart that was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities? What rest could he give, who himself was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? Must we not believe that, far below the troubles of Christ's agitated spirit, there were deep waters whose placid surface was never ruffled; — waters that constantly reflected the palaces and cities of the celestial world, — a divine ocean of satisfaction and happiness, from which flowed pure and refreshing streams? Indeed, he declared, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give

him, shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Even while his disciples were in the midst of severe trials and persecutions, he could yet impart to them a peace which the world could neither give nor take away. He could lift them far above their persecutors, into that serene atmosphere in which his own divine spirit floated, — an atmosphere filled with the blessedness of heaven. St. Paul felt this satisfaction when he said, in writing to the Corinthians, "As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." And if Christ could give to his disciples rest in the midst of their labors, and joy in the midst of their sorrows, how full will be the peace, how intense the pleasure, that he will impart when he receives them to his celestial kingdom! What a depth of meaning will be then contained in the words, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." No transient good, no limited blessings, do I impart; but I give as a God, — as a being who has infinite resources at his command, and who has the disposition as well as ability to bestow upon his friends the greatest blessings.

II. The rest promised involves a freedom from all doubts and anxieties concerning our religious state. There are favored seasons here, when the Christian can say, "*I know* that my Redeemer

liveth." There are bright spots along the pathway of life, that seem to be illumined by some beam of light that has escaped from the celestial world. But, at other times, harassing doubts overshadow the spirit. Faith is weakened. Confidence in God, in his promises, and even in the whole scheme of salvation, is shaken. The Bible seems full of dark mysteries and perplexing problems. Prayer is a burden, for the throne of grace appears to be afar off. Meditation only calls up images of coming evil. Not unfrequently a flood of unbelief will rush upon the mind, with such force as to threaten to sweep away every holy purpose and Christian hope.

Even the patriarchs and prophets, God's messengers to mankind, — men eminent for their spiritual attainments, the light of whose example relieved the intense darkness of the early ages, — even they had their seasons of perplexity and gloom. Elijah, after witnessing the most wonderful displays of divine favor, and triumphing over the prophets of Baal, falls into a state of despondency, and requests that he may die. David, who could at one time greatly rejoice in the Lord, at another time exclaims, "I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day."

The apostles of Christ, who enjoyed the personal instructions of their master, — who were his intimate companions in his walks, labors and devotions; who

witnessed his miracles, and shared largely in his affections,—were unstable in their faith and hopes. It required the greatest care and effort, on the part of Christ, to keep them from relinquishing their prospects of heavenly felicity.

Even that apostle who was denominated, pre-eminently, the “rock of the church, against which the gates of hell should not prevail,” was found, during the trial of his Master, standing without the court, despairing of the cause he had espoused, and uttering falsehood and blasphemy.

St. Paul, who at one time was full of confidence and hope, with his spirit glowing with anticipations of future blessedness, at another exclaimed, “O, wretched man that I am! who can deliver me from the body of this death?”

Could the history and condition of one human heart, reputed eminent for holiness, be accurately portrayed, how dark and melancholy would be the picture! What distrust of God; what false conceptions of his moral government; what inadequate views of the atonement, and of the agency of the Holy Spirit! And even in cases where there is an earnest struggling after the higher life, and clearer views of divine and heavenly things, how slowly does the mind rise to “a full assurance of hope”!

While we are in the body, and immersed in the cares of life, we cannot, indeed, expect to obtain

perfect spiritual repose. In spite of all our watchfulness and efforts, the flesh will war against the spirit. The atheism of the world will assail our faith. Material objects will hide from our view celestial and divine things. It is difficult to walk by faith, amid objects of sight; difficult to feel the presence of an invisible Being, who, though unseen by us, knows every thought and emotion of the heart; difficult to believe that a God of infinite purity can receive into his holy courts beings so defiled with sin, — that the Infinite Jehovah can condescend to companionship with worms of the dust.

But, from all doubt and anxiety, “there remaineth a rest to the people of God.” The hour is at hand — it is very near — when every cloud shall vanish from their spiritual horizon; when they shall recline in sweet security amid the bowers of a celestial paradise, with the river of life flowing at their feet, whose soft murmurings, falling as music upon their hearts, will express their inward serenity.

There, too, will be rest and happiness, for every variety of taste and age, among the redeemed. The bright visions of the young, who are early impressed with the fading nature of all earthly objects, the fond dreams of the meditative spirit, and the longings of the afflicted for consolation and rest, will there be fully realized.

‘*Dream’st thou of heaven? — What dreams are thine,
Fair child, fair, gladsome child,
With eyes that like the dew-drop shine,
And bounding footsteps wild !*

‘Tell me what hues the immortal shore
Can wear, my bird, to thee,
Ere yet one shadow hath passed o’er
Thy glance and spirit free?’

‘O, beautiful is heaven, and bright,
With long, long summer-days ;
I see its lilies gleam in light,
Where many a fountain plays.

‘And there, unchecked, methinks I rove,
And seek where young flowers lie,
In vale and golden-fruited grove,
Flowers that are not to die !’

‘Thou poet of the lonely thought,
Sad heir of gifts divine !
Say, with what solemn glory fraught
Is heaven in dreams of thine ?’

‘O, where the living waters flow
Along that radiant shore,
My soul, a wanderer here, shall know
The exile-thirst no more.

‘The burden of a stranger’s heart,
Which here along I bear,
Like the night-shadow shall depart,
With my first wakening *there*.

‘And, borne on eagle’s wings afar,
Free thought shall claim its dower,
From every realm, from every star,
Of glory and of power.’

‘ O woman ! with the soft, sad eye,
Of spiritual gleam,
Tell me, of those bright worlds on high,
How doth *thy* fond heart dream ?

‘ By thy sweet, mournful voice I know,
On thy pale brow I see,
That thou hast loved in fear and woe ;
Say, what is heaven to thee ? ’

‘ O, heaven is where no secret dread
May haunt love’s meeting hour ;
Where from the past no gloom is shed
O’er the heart’s chosen bower ;

‘ Where every severed wreath is bound ;
Where none have heard the knell
That smites the heart with that deep sound,
Farewell, beloved, — farewell. ’ ”

III. This rest will include a freedom from all temptation and sin. Herein will be its chief excellence ; for the great calamity that overtops all others, that throws into the shade all others, is moral evil. Physical pain, earthquakes, storms, disease, — these are but the types and shadows of evil, in the comparison. Sin strikes inwardly. It assails the most noble part of man’s nature ; makes havoc with godlike faculties and powers. Disease prostrates the body, but this blasts the soul. War wastes empires ; this wastes a spiritual empire of more value than the material universe, — an empire of thoughts, desires, and hopes. It batters down

walls that are designed for the protection of immortal interests. It breaks in the gates, and allows hosts of enemies to rush in and take possession. It demolishes every altar consecrated to Heaven, every temple devoted to worship. It obliterates all that is lovely and beautiful.

And where sin is there can be no peace. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Where there is the least remains of sin in the heart, there is a disturbance produced, just as the slightest mote in the eye occasions an irritation until it is removed. The Christian feels it in his seasons of religious meditations, in his hours of worship and prayer. He feels it especially when he is making efforts to advance in the divine life. He finds that every inch of ground is disputed by an antagonistic force, and that he must gird himself for the conflict. He discovers that he is called to "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The power and number of the foes arrayed against him, require him to put forth his whole strength. If he would make progress in spirituality, he is convinced that he must have his "loins girt about with truth, and have on the breastplate of righteousness," — that he must "take the helmet of salva-

tion, and the sword of the Spirit." He is also deeply affected by the developments and effects of sin around him. The awful apostasy of mankind, the idolatry and debasement of millions of the human family, the vices that reign in civilized communities, the practical atheism of multitudes, the systems of oppression that embody the worse forms of avarice and injustice, the wrongs inflicted upon the innocent and unprotected, — these and other forms of sin distress him. Every blasphemous oath he hears, wounds him. Every instance of successful villainy causes him pain. He feels as did the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law."

When, too, the evil passions of men reach such an intensity as to become organized, and are directed against the Christian in the form of persecution, then he feels the severity of the battle here, and looks upward, with longing eyes, for rest. Besides the ordinary evil influences against which he has to contend, he is now under a pressure that seriously tries his faith, and puts to the test his fortitude, and the strength of his devotion to Christianity. He is threatened with the loss of property, friends, and even life itself. He is exposed to the rudest insults, held up to the public scorn, made the victim of popular fury, driven from city to city, imprisoned, tortured, and perhaps put to death.

Yet what multitudes, during the severe persecutions through which the church has, at different periods, passed, have been sustained by the assurance that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God!" How many who compose the noble army of martyrs were enabled, by the energy of their faith and the intensity of their love for Christ, to press through all opposition! Neither flatteries nor threats, neither bribes nor tortures, could move them. They had counted "all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." They had caught glimpses of the bright regions above, and they kept their eyes steadily fixed upon the stars of heavenly hope. And, although clouds would sometimes intervene, and the heavens gather blackness, and the thunder roar, and the lightning flash, yet they were confident that the storm would break away, — that the clouds would open, and they would again see, in the far distance, the peaceful mansions which were prepared for them.

We might cite noble instances of faith and fortitude, in the midst of the hazards and tortures of severe persecution; — men who, while longing for rest, were yet willing to suffer all things for Christ's sake; who, while panting for heaven, were yet submissive under the shocks of the world's wickedness and treachery.

And these heroes, though they appeared calm to

the spectators around them, yet were often the subjects of inward struggles and conflicts, of which the outward were but the types and shadows. The dying exclamation of St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight," is full of intense meaning. It was no mere shadow of a warfare in which he was engaged. It was no May-day amusement that absorbed his energies, and taxed his strength. It was a conflict that required him to have on the whole armor of God, — the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit. He passed through an ordeal of fire and blood, that would have destroyed ordinary minds. He endured afflictions as a good soldier of the cross. He adds, "I have finished my course." This was an intense relief. The apostle felt somewhat as his illustrious Master did when he exclaimed "It is finished;" for, with him, his trials and dangers were all finished. The work of life was done. His mission on earth was accomplished. "I have kept the faith." This expression, too, is full of meaning; for that faith had been often in peril. The apostle was at times anxious lest he should lose it, — lest his Christianity might suffer shipwreck in the storms through which he was called to pass. But now he can exclaim, "Blessed be God, I have kept the faith, and the faith has kept me; — has kept my soul from being taken in the snares of the adversary; has kept my hopes

from perishing; has kept me in favor with God and all holy beings! And now I go to my rest, — go to enjoy the peace of God, that passeth all understanding.” And, at this hour, the apostles, prophets, martyrs, and hosts of the redeemed, are enjoying spiritual rest. Upon the banks of the Jordan, or under the shadows of the temples in the holy city, they can recline, and recount to each other the dangers through which they have passed, and rejoice together in the possession of everlasting rest.

IV. The heavenly rest carries with it the idea of triumph. It is not only a peaceful and happy rest, but it is a glorious rest. The redeemed rest, as conquerors, upon the fame of their exploits, upon the trophies of their victories. They have been faithful unto death, and have received immortal crowns. They have overcome the world, and, as a reward, are seated upon Christ’s throne. They are made pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out. They have become kings and priests unto God.

“I beheld,” says St. John, “and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

“ These glorious minds, — how bright they shine !

Whence all their white array ?

How came they to the happy seats

Of everlasting day ?

From torturing pains to endless joys

On fiery wheels they rode,

And strangely washed their raiment white

In Jesus’ dying blood.

Now they approach the eternal God,

And bow before his throne ;

Their warbling harps and sacred songs

Adore the Holy One.”

The devoted Payson, on his dying bed, feeling the glow of this triumph, exclaimed, “ The battle’s fought ! the battle’s fought ! and *the victory is won !* I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity, and benevolence, and happiness, to all eternity !” At another time, he said, “ The celestial city is full in view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its music strikes upon my ear, and its spirit breathes into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears as a narrow rill, which may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission.

“ The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and larger as he approached ; and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float, like an insect in the beams of the

sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm."

The pious Holland, while listening, in his dying hours, to the reading of the Scriptures, and giving his meditations upon each passage, suddenly exclaimed to his friend, "O, stay your reading! What brightness is this I see? Have you lighted up any candles?" Mr. L. replied, "No, it is the sunshine;" for it was about five o'clock, on a beautiful summer's evening. "Sunshine!" said he. "Nay, it is my Saviour's shine. Now, farewell world! Welcome, heaven! The day-star from on high hath visited me. O, speak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral; — God dealeth familiarly with man! I feel his mercy; I see his majesty; whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, — God knoweth, — but I see things that are unutterable." Thus, full of rapture, he passed away to the spirit world, the sweet tones of his voice growing fainter and fainter, until they were merged in the melody of heaven

Christian reader,

"So shalt thou rest; and what if thou shalt fall
Unnoticed by the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. * * * *

As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men, —
The young, in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years ; matron and maid ;
The bowed with age ; the infant, in the smiles
And beauty of its innocent age cut off, —
Shall, one by one, be gathered to thy side,
By those who, in their turn, shall follow them.

So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon ; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams !”

IV.

NO NIGHT IN HEAVEN.

“And there shall be no night there.” — REVELATION XXII. 5.

THIS is another of those striking and comprehensive utterances, by which St. John endeavors to describe what is indescribable, and to aid us in conceiving what is inconceivable. All attempts to comprehend the nature and blessedness of the heavenly state, are as ineffectual as an effort to measure with the eye the height of a mountain whose summit is enveloped and lost in the clouds, or to traverse, with our present organization, the distances that separate us from the fixed stars. Yet, as the astronomer, by careful study and the use of artificial aids, is enabled to enlarge his conceptions of the physical universe, and to gaze upon suns and systems that are invisible to the naked eye, so the Christian, with the assistance of the telescopic power of the Bible, may extend his views of the heavenly world, and discover new beauties and glories in the moral firmament above him.

The terms darkness and light are often used in the Scriptures as emblems of spiritual objects. As

descriptive of the prevalence of sin, darkness is said to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. It is synonymous with ignorance, sorrow, wretchedness and the divine judgments. The day of the Lord coming in terror, is "a day of darkness and gloominess, — a day of clouds and of thick darkness." For the finally impenitent there "is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

On the other hand, light is emblematic of loveliness, beauty, truth and happiness. Pouring forth from its centre, it chases away the darkness, renders visible the material universe, decks a thousand objects with beauty, and clothes the works of the great Architect with a drapery of richest lustre and variegated splendor. Light is to the eye what truth is to the mind, the medium of communication with realities, — the source of the highest stimulus and the most exquisite delight.

The apostle declares that "God is light." He not only shines through his works, and pours his effulgence through suns and stars, but he is in himself light. Christ is exhibited to us as rising upon the world as "the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings." Christians are denominated "the light of the world;" and they are commanded to let their light so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven. This image runs through the

whole Christian economy, and furnishes, perhaps, the nearest approximation that we have to spiritual objects. Its purity, its ethereal nature, its reviving, cheering influence, its power to call the earth from the tomb of night, to the life and blessedness of day, its capability of resting upon the world without participating in its corruptions, of entering every abode without feeling the contagion from their sinful inhabitants, render it a fit emblem of the unseen and spiritual. Perhaps we may regard it as the connecting link between the material and the immaterial, — as the element that will survive, in some form, the general wreck of all that is visible. It may not be altogether a suggestion of the fancy, that in the hour of the Christian's dissolution, while the body descends into darkness, — the darkness of the grave, — the spirit rises into light, — the light of an eternal day. It may float away into higher regions, clothed in a robe of dazzling splendor, and radiant with all the colors of the rainbow.

In our present sphere, God shines upon us through external mediums. He has suspended in the great temple of nature a bright orb, through which he pours his effulgence upon the earth by day, and stars that relieve the darkness by night. He shines, too, through all his works ; — through mountains, valleys and verdure ; through every tree, plant and flower ; through the plumage of every bird, the

mechanism of every insect, the organization of the human frame, and the workings of the intellect of man.

But in that higher, nobler, purer state, towards which every earnest Christian is making progress, there will be no need of this external apparatus. It will be all swept away, and the redeemed will be admitted into the presence-chamber of the Infinite One. They will gaze, with an unclouded vision, upon the full effulgence of the Deity, and experience the blessedness of being where "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

"There shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light."

From this declaration, we learn, in the first place, *that there will be, in that world, no need of rest.*

The absence of night, with our present constitution, and under the present economy of things, would be far from a blessing. After the toils of the day, we need repose. The husbandman needs it, as he returns from his labors in the field. The tradesman, the artificer, the scholar, — all, as the shades of night fall upon the earth, crave rest. Without it, the physical, and even the mental system, soon becomes exhausted ; — the muscles and sinews lose their strength ; the machinery of mind

and body is broken up. The most profound studies, the most interesting investigations, the most satisfying enjoyments, can be pursued only for a short period. A sense of weariness soon indicates our frailty, and the darkness of night comes to tell us of our weakness. The most intellectual philosophers, the proudest monarchs, the mightiest armies, must sleep.

How great, then, the change, in our physical and mental constitution, that will fit us for a world in which there is no night, — where no fatigue will occasion the slightest suspension of our duties, or interruption of our joys! To what a height in the scale of existence does the conception lift us, to imagine ourselves possessed of bodies capable of an unceasing activity, and minds proof against the influence of fatigue! It cannot but deepen our impressions of the blessedness of the heavenly state, to know that there, the discipline of the mind may be carried to the highest perfection, — that the most profound, elaborate and important truths may be investigated without fatigue or interruption, — that we may go from one height to another, in the scale of intellectual advancement, and yet, all the while, feel the freshness of the morning, and the vigor of youth. It is difficult, nay, impossible, to conceive how rapidly the faculties will develop and powers expand in such a state. The ability of the mind to

know and to worship God, — to admire his character, to fathom the mysteries of his being, to comprehend his providence, to study his works, — will increase in a ratio that no present calculation can reach. The saint will become more intensely conscious of his likeness to Him, who, it is affirmed, “never slumbers or sleeps.” Freed from the incumbrance of a material and perishable body, fired with the thought that even the rolling ages of eternity can bring with them no weariness or interruption, rejoicing in the evidence that every increase in knowledge is accession of strength, the glorified saint will be continually tracing out, with increasing distinctness, the lineaments of the divine image in which he was created.

But, besides affording a season for rest, night is necessary, in the present world, as an instructor. Had we perpetual sunshine, our views of the power of the Deity, the extent of his authority, and the magnificence of the universe, would be comparatively limited. We should suppose this earth to comprise by far the greater portion of the Creator’s dominions, and we should be inclined to assign to ourselves a position of high importance in the scale of intelligences. But, as the sun sinks below the horizon, the great map of the universe is unrolled to our view. The myriads of lights that everywhere blaze over the canopy of heaven tell us of

other worlds, more vast and important, perhaps, than our own; tell us of immensities that even the imagination of man cannot traverse; tell us, — O, wondrous discovery! — that we are surrounded with receptacles of life and happiness that in number defy all arithmetical calculation, — that, for aught we know, are as numerous as the sands upon the sea-shore. And how many interesting conjectures does this discovery start up in the mind, as to the mission of these myriads of worlds; — as to their size, shape, accompanying rings and satellites; the number, character and destiny, of their inhabitants; as to the probability that the work of creation is constantly going on, and the boundaries of the material universe enlarging, as one age succeeds another! Yet, the fact that we need the darkness of night to open to us the wonders of creation, is itself evidence of the imperfections of our present organs of vision. The veil of night must fall, before we can even know of the existence of other systems. The sun must withdraw its brightness, to enable us to discern these distant orbs. And still, what we behold of them, compared with what is invisible, is to us what the beacon-lights along an extensive coast are to the mariner. He sees these faint glimmerings dotting the horizon, while the vast continent, with its peopled cities, its mountains, plains, rivers and forests, are totally invisible.

We are accustomed to speak of our wonderful powers of vision ; and properly so, when we consider how extensive a panorama the eye is capable of surveying, and with what delicacy and accuracy a thousand objects may, at the same instant, be painted upon the retina. Yet, a moment's reflection will show us, that it is only a narrow stratum, comparatively, of even material objects, that is visible to us, while above and below, there are vast tracts that are only discernible by the aid of artificial means. With the assistance of telescopic power we are able to go above, and view myriads of worlds, the existence of which could never have been discovered by the naked eye. With the microscope we can go below, and become acquainted with orders of existences, which display, equally with our own physical organization, the skill, wisdom and power, of the Creator. And, even with these aids, we know not how limited our incursions are into these foreign regions.

But, in another sphere, when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, we shall need no artificial aids to help us to discern surrounding objects. We shall need no veil of night to enable us to gaze upon the wonders and splendors of creation. With superior organs, with more refined senses, with enlarged faculties, we shall view the brilliant scenes around us, rejoicing in the

dawnings of an eternal day, — dawnings that will throw their lustre upon turrets, palaces, cities and kingdoms, over which the mantle of night shall never be thrown.

There shall be no night of sorrow in heaven.

Darkness is the fit emblem of wretchedness. The afflicted spirit is under a cloud, — is the victim of night-tempests, the gloom and fury of which can only be fully known by experience. The bereaved walk in a vale of tears, with crushed hearts, blighted hopes, agonizing thoughts. I need not tell the reader that this is a world of sorrows, of disappointments, of calamities, that rend asunder the very heart-strings. I need not tell you of your liability to lose, with the suddenness of the lightning's flash, the dearest objects of your affections, — need not point you to the wrecks that are strewn along the coast of human life. It is true that afflictions often come on a mission of benevolence. It is true that, with many of the children of sorrow, it is necessary that their sun of prosperity set, and a night of gloom shut down upon them, in order to render visible the stars of heavenly hopes. By no other means can they be induced to look upward, and cast their anchor of hope within the veil. By no other means can they be led to inquire, “Where is God, my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?” We allow, with a beautiful writer, “that in the deepest moral

darkness there can be music, — music which sounds softer and sweeter than by day ; and that when the instruments of human melody are broken, there is a hand which can sweep the heart-strings, and wake the notes of praise.”

Yet upon all, the sorrows of earth come with a crushing weight. “No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.” Ask the mother who is sitting by the side of her pale, cold child, — a beloved form, silent, motionless, unconscious, the pulsations of life stopped, the spirit fled to return no more, — ask her, if there is not a keenness in affliction ! Ask the youthful widow, whose bridal robes have been soon exchanged for the habiliments of mourning, — whose bright visions of earthly happiness have all faded, — whose beloved companion sleeps in the damp, silent, cruel grave, — if earth’s trials do not pierce the heart ! Enter the family where death has preceded you, and how suddenly has the voice of gayety, and the music of mirth, been hushed ! How changed is every countenance, every movement, every heart ! The spirit of melancholy broods over the scene ! The very rooms and furniture seem to share in the gloom. The very air seems to whisper, “Tread softly, for a dread, mysterious messenger hath visited this family, and laid its hopes in ashes.” Bleeding hearts are here, to which mere words of comfort

sound formal and cold. Sorrows are here, that earth cannot heal.

Visit the dying man, and learn lessons of affliction from his prostrate, emaciated form, his wasted countenance, his baffled plans, his pains and groans, his mysterious dread of that dark pathway into which he must soon go down!

Nor can we, while in this world, escape these nights of sadness. We are frail, and disease may arrest us; we are mortal, and death may seize us. Our friends, children, companions, are lent to us, and the great Proprietor of all may take them back to himself. We are sinners, and at any moment the calamitous results of our wickedness may be sprung upon us. The fruits of years of transgression may be compressed within a few short, fatal days. We are surrounded with iniquity, in its various intense and destructive forms; and this keeps the fountain of sorrow open,—the deep, wide, rushing tide, ever in motion. And night, especially, is the season of its triumphs. Then crime stalks abroad; then villany, under its cloak of darkness, executes its base and wicked designs; then the unwary are ensnared, the tempted fall, the innocent are sacrificed. O, is it not a blessed announcement, that there is a world in which “there shall be no night;”—no night of crime, deceit, treachery or temptation;—no night of pain, sickness or death?

O, tell it to the penitent, who is struggling against the evil habits and depraved inclinations of a wicked heart, — who, on life's fierce battle-field, is striving to win an immortal crown! Tell it to the dying man, who, restless upon his couch, through long, wearisome nights, is trying to learn the lessons of submission, and faith, and moral discipline, which his sufferings are teaching, — who longs for light to break through the dark clouds that are gathering about him! Hasten with the tidings to the bereaved family, and assure them that there is a world where these griefs shall be lifted from their oppressed spirits, and their present afflictions, if rightly improved, shall work out for them “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” For where God is, there can be no night. Where bright, holy angels throng, there can be no sorrow. Where celestial music rolls through the galleries and arches of temples filled with the effulgence of the Deity, there can be no sighing. Where Jesus reigns in his majesty and glory, “all tears shall be wiped away.”

No night in heaven! Then no sad partings are experienced there; — no funeral processions move, no death-knell is heard, no graves are opened. Then no mysterious providences will there perplex us, no dark calamities will shake our faith; but we shall walk the golden streets of the eternal city, surrounded with perpetual brightness, breathing an

atmosphere of heavenly purity, and free to enter the palaces of our King, or climb to heights over which no shadow ever passes.

If such, indeed, be the glory of heaven, why should we desire to hold our friends and the objects of our affections to earth? Why keep them in a world of darkness and sorrow, when God calls them to the light and blessedness of an eternal day? The following sweet poetic dialogue cannot fail to awaken the tenderest emotions in a mother's heart.

It is entitled

THE MOTHER AND HER DYING BOY.

BOY.

My mother, my mother ! O, let me depart !
Your tears and your pleadings are swords to my heart.
I hear gentle voices, that chide my delay ;
I see lovely visions, that woo me away.
My prison is broken, my trials are o'er !
O mother, my mother, detain me no more !

MOTHER.

And will you, then, leave us, my brightest, my best ?
And will you run nestling no more to my breast ?
The summer is coming to sky and to bower ;
The tree that you planted will soon be in flower ;
You loved the soft season of song and of bloom ;
O, shall it return, and find you in your tomb ?

BOY.

Yes, mother, I loved in the sunshine to play,
And talk with the birds and the blossoms all day ;

But sweeter the songs of the spirits on high,
 And brighter the glories round God in the sky!
 I see them, I hear them, they pull at my heart;
 My mother, my mother, O, let me depart!

MOTHER.

O, do not desert us! Our hearts will be drear,
 Our home will be lonely, when you are not here;
 Your brother will sigh 'mid his playthings, and say,
 I wonder dear William so long can delay.
 That foot, like the wild wind,—that glance, like a star,—
 O, what will this world be when they are afar?

BOY.

This world, dearest mother!—O, live not for this!
 No, press on with me to the fulness of bliss!
 And trust me, whatever bright fields I may roam,
 My heart will not wander from you and from home.
 Believe me still near you, on pinions of love;
 Expect me to hail you, when soaring above.

MOTHER.

Well, go, my beloved! the conflict is o'er;
 My pleas are all selfish,—I urge them no more.
 Why chain your bright spirit down here to the clod,
 So thirsting for freedom, so ripe for its God?
 Farewell, then, farewell, till we meet at the throne,
 Where love fears no parting, and tears are unknown!

BOY.

O, glory! O, glory! what music! what light!
 What wonders break in on my heart, on my sight!
 I come, blessed spirits! I hear you from high.
 O, frail, faithless nature! can this be to die?
 So near! what, so near to my Saviour and King?
 O, help me, ye angels, His glories to sing!

There will be no night of ignorance in heaven.

Here, our highest attainment in knowledge is comparative ignorance. Our clearest conceptions of truth are confused and indistinct. Even the little knowledge that we do possess costs us a vast amount of toil, protracted study and conflicts, with wandering thoughts and perplexing doubts. We can learn of God, the greatest and best of beings, only through dim shadows, and faint types, and material representations. Our views of his moral government, obtained through his providential dealings here, are crude and unsatisfactory. When we are enjoying the bright sunlight, and all nature is clothed with richness and beauty,—when we walk amid the mountains and majestic forests, God's earthly palaces, and breathe the fragrance of flowers, and tread beneath our feet the soft verdure, and see above us the crimsoned clouds and mild blue vault, and, amid all, drink of the cup of pleasure,—we are ready to exclaim, with the Psalmist, “The Lord is good, and his tender mercies are over all his works.” But let the scene be changed. Let the midnight tempest arise, and our habitations quiver under the fury of the storm; let the earth tremble under the successive peals and crashes of the thunder, and the heavens seem on fire from the incessant flashes of lightning; let the shrieks of bereaved friends tell where the fatal fluid has struck,

and amid the wild terror of the scene, doubts will throng the mind as to the infinitude of the divine love, — as to the purely benevolent design of God's moral administration. These checkered scenes will perplex us, and we are led to exclaim, with the apostle, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Even with the aid of Christianity, how little we absolutely know of the Deity, — his designs, plans and works; how little of the mysteries of the future life, — of the wonders of that state to which time is so rapidly bearing us! "Now we see through a glass darkly." "Now I know in part."

In the departments of human learning, too, the same obscurity and uncertainty perplex us. Upon the most important principles in science, philosophy and ethics, we find that the wisest men are divided. Rival schools are contending for directly opposite systems. The principles of one age are supplanted by the fruits of the superior intelligence and more profound investigations of that which succeeds it. How different is the science of astronomy, for example, from what it was a century ago! A single modern discovery of a gifted astronomer has effected a complete revolution in the ideas, calculations and studies, of the world, upon this science; and what new changes and discoveries await it, the future alone can reveal.

In mental philosophy, how little satisfactory progress has been made ! Nothing, in fact, has been accomplished here, worthy of the name of science. No principles are permanently settled. Human language, in its present state, at least, seems to be too gross a medium through which to communicate, with accuracy and precision, a knowledge of the elements and interior workings of the intellect of man.

But in heaven there will be no night of ignorance. There, with unfettered powers, — with a clear, discriminating reason ; with a keen, spiritual vision, — we shall see and know all truth. We shall be liable to no mistakes, be exposed to no errors, be perplexed with no mysteries. We shall no longer need to pass through the tedious processes of study and investigation. We shall no longer be baffled, in our attempts to ascend the heights of knowledge, by a shattered memory, a perverted judgment, and powers weakened by sin. We shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. As the elements and essence of our own being lie exposed to the eye of the Infinite Intelligence, so the elements and essence of all other beings and objects will be clearly seen by us. We shall have a view of the power, majesty, excellence and splendor, of the Deity, of which we can now form no conception. God will, as it were, enter into the mind of the saint, take possession of it as

his own temple, and fill it with the lustre of his own being, with the purity of his own nature, with the blessedness and perfection of his own character. And the very act of beholding God will strengthen the powers and enlarge the capacities of the mind. It will develop faculties that now lie slumbering in the intellect, the opening of which will afford the most exquisite delight, and be as the dawnings of a new creation upon the soul, — dawnings that will pour their effulgence through all the chambers of the memory, and all the faculties of the soul.

And, as we extend our view to other beings and objects, we shall comprehend and realize the meaning of the language, “They shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.” The candle of human instrumentalities is no longer needed. The sun itself is quenched; for God, the author of light, shines in its stead. That splendid orb that had lighted the pathways of so many generations, — that had poured its golden beams upon so many mountain-tops, and painted so many flowers with beauty, — whose rays had sparkled in a thousand gems, and sported upon numberless ocean waves, — is forever quenched.

“O, thou art glorious, orb of day!
Exulting nations hail thy ray;
Creation swells a choral lay,
To welcome thy return!”

From thee all nature draws her hues,
Thy beams the insect's wing suffuse,
And in the diamond burn.

Yet must thou fade ;— when earth and heaven
By fire and tempest shall be riven,
Thou, from thy sphere of radiance driven,
O sun ! must fall at last.
Another heaven, another earth, —
New power, new glory, — shall have birth,
When all we see is past.

But He who gave the word of might, —
'Let there be light,' — and there *was* light ;
Who bade thee chase the gloom of night,
And beam the world to bless ;
Forever bright, forever pure,
Alone unchanging shall endure,
The Sun of Righteousness ! ”

Under the intense effulgence of his glory, all clouds will be dissipated, all mysteries solved. The attributes of the Deity will shine in unclouded splendor, illuminating the whole heavens with their rich and variegated coruscations, and revealing the fact that the universe is one vast temple, whose arches echo the music of the spheres, and the adoring accents of thronging worshippers.

“ There shall be no night there,” for it is eternal day. Every object is brilliant with an effulgence more intense than the sun-light. The tree of life casts no shadows indicative of a setting sun. The sparkling of the crystal river is never dimmed by

the mantle of darkness. The white-robed multitude continually go in and out of the glittering city, their brows irradiated by that shining light, which shineth more and more unto the *perfect day*.

“ Creature all grandeur, son of truth and light,
Up from the dust ! the last great day is bright ;
Bright on the holy mountain, round the throne, —
Bright where, in borrowed light, the far stars shone.
Look down ! the depths are bright ! and hear them cry,
‘ Light ! light ! ’ Look up ! ’tis rushing down from high !
Regions on regions, far away they shine :
’Tis light ineffable, ’tis light divine !
‘ Immortal light, and life forevermore ! ’
Off through the deeps is heard from shore to shore,
Of rolling worlds, — ‘ Man, wake thee from the sod, —
Wake thee from death, — awake ! — and live with God ! ’ ”

VI.

THE LIKENESS OF THE REDEEMED TO CHRIST.

“We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.” — 1ST OF JOHN, III. 2.

It is a blessed feature of the gospel, that it reveals the Christian’s likeness to his Saviour. It assures him that he is made a “partaker of the divine nature,” — is “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” This is effected at the moment regeneration takes place. The divine image is stamped anew upon the soul. The rudiments of a transformation appear, that will carry the subject forward through successive stages of improvement, until he attains “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

At the period of conversion, the real life of the soul begins. Previous to this, it is “dead in trespasses and sins.” Its action is like that of a galvanized corpse, spasmodic, fitful, and aimless. It has organs of vision, but no insight into spiritual truth. It has the power of speech, but its utterances are incoherent and false. But at the new birth its true

life commences. It becomes then like him who is “the way, the truth, and the life.”

We may regard the likeness referred to as relating to *the external appearance, the intellectual and moral nature, and the state of felicity* which the saints will enjoy in common, though not in degree, with the Redeemer.

St. Paul says that Christ (Phil. iii. 21) “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Of the precise nature of “his glorious body” — “*τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*” — we have no adequate conception. Indeed, the meaning of the word *glory*, as applied to celestial objects, it is difficult to define. It primarily signifies to open, to expand with clearness. Hence, brightness, splendor. The celebrated John Howe defines the glory of Deity to be “nothing else but resplendent excellency, the lustre of excellency, or real worth made conspicuous.”

St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, attempts to describe the glorious bodies of the redeemed, and language seems to break down under the weight of his thoughts, or, rather, it is consumed by their glow and excessive effulgence. “There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.

So, also, is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." A few beams of this celestial glory have at different times reached the earth. They rested upon Mount Sinai, when God appeared to give his law through his servant Moses. They shone about the tabernacle, and in the temple, when special manifestations of the Deity were made. At the birth of the Saviour, the pious shepherds were dazzled and affrighted, as "the glory of the Lord shone round about them." At his baptism, the heavens were opened, — ἀνεψχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί, — or, as some foreign commentators interpret the passage, the heavens were cleft* asunder, as though by vivid lightning, and the glory burst through and rested upon the Saviour.

On the mount of transfiguration, the three apostles beheld our Lord in his glorious body. St. Luke describes the scene thus (Luke ix. 29–31): "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And

* "So," they add, "we find *scindere* and *findere* cœlum, in the Roman writers. Such language being adapted to the common opinion of the ancients, that the sky was a solid mass, and that fire from thence burst through the vast convex of the firmament." Bloomfield, however, remarks: "We have good reason to suppose the light to have been *preternatural*, and to have accompanied the divine Spirit, — such a light as accompanied Jesus on being visibly revealed to St Paul at his conversion."

behold, there talked with him two men, Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory." We might cite other instances, but these suffice, as examples of the point under consideration. Those who enjoyed these beatific visions had views of a "glorious body" that we cannot obtain. Stephen at the time of his martyrdom, Paul when converted, the favored company who witnessed the ascension of Christ, and those just referred to, obtained as vivid impressions of glory as our present organs of vision are capable of receiving.

Although we are less favored, yet there are certain features of this subject, upon which faith may rest with confidence.

In the first place, we shall have some form of bodily organization in heaven. Whether material elements will enter into the composition of this body, or what will be its form, size or appearance, we cannot now determine. We are assured that it will be like Christ's glorious body, and we may infer that it will bear some resemblance to our present bodies, as in the case of Christ, when Paul, Stephen, and others, recognized him in his glorious body. At least, the change, though great, though inconceivably wonderful, will not be such as to destroy our personal identity, any more than that which takes place when the helpless infant becomes a full-grown and vigorous man. The same being who here, on

life's battle-field, struggles with corruption, shall be clothed with incorruption; the same mortal, here frail, weak, liable to disease, injury and death, shall be clothed with immortality.

The change will be such, however, as will fit us for our new state and new duties. It is the universal law among animal existences, that the organization of the being shall be suited to its element; — the fish to the water, the beast to the field and forest, the bird to the air. And when the animal or insect is removed from one element to another, there is a corresponding change made in his organization; as, for instance, when the crawling worm is converted into the beautiful butterfly, and, instead of mingling in the dust, sports in the sunbeam, and is regaled amid the fragrance of flowers. It is therefore in accordance with the established order of nature, that “we shall all be changed.” We shall have bodies like Christ’s “glorious body,” suited to a celestial sphere; with organs of sight that will enable us to view spiritual objects; with organs of hearing that will catch the strains of celestial music; with a splendid and effulgent attire, suitable to our admission to the palace of the great King; with an ethereal organization, fitted to execute, with lightning speed, the commands of our Sovereign. So great will be this change that St. Paul says, to the Colossian Christians, in their present state, “Ye

are dead," — that is, dead comparatively; dead to all worldly hopes and blessings, — "and your life is hid with Christ in God." The life-principle has not perished, but it is hid away, as a valuable treasure, where it will be safe. He then immediately breaks forth with the sublime announcement, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Ye shall mingle with the bright and illustrious throng that attend him. Ye shall share his honors, participate in his triumphs, constitute, in fact, the pomp and regal splendor of this great conquest celebration.

The likeness of the glorified saint to his divine Lord *will also respect the intellectual nature*. Some persons may be disposed to confine the resemblance to the external appearance, or bodily organization; but such would be a very partial and unsatisfactory likeness. Besides, the passage does by no means require so limited an interpretation. The likeness referred to is general and complete. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." When the Psalmist exclaims, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness," he means something more than an external likeness to his Lord. The satisfaction and joy that he anticipates must have a deeper source than this. They must spring from an intellectual and spiritual resemblance.

If the body is to undergo such astonishing changes, — if corruption is to put on incorruption, and this mortal become immortal, — why should not the mind be greatly changed? Why should not this thinking, feeling, acting, energizing principle within us, be clothed with new powers and fresh energies?

In the present state, the mind is weakened by sin. The storms of iniquity have beat upon it, and shattered its noble faculties, and deranged its fine powers. The reason holds but a precarious authority, and is often silenced and overpowered by passion. The judgment is perverted. The walls of memory are broken down. The will acts inconsistently, and often feebly. Our ideas are crude, indistinct, partial, and unsatisfying. Our truth is half error; our faith is half scepticism. “We know but in part.” “We see as through a glass darkly.”

But “when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” Out of this wreck of mind, this chaos of mental faculties, will spring a godlike intellect, sound, vigorous, clear, mighty in all its powers. Its full glory, its surpassing excellence, its vast superiority to mind in its present state, “doth not yet appear.” Nor will any effort or study here make this apparent. We may seek for light earnestly, diligently, and yet no rays will even skirt the darkness of our ignorance. We may knock at the door

of the most subtile metaphysics, of the most profound erudition, of the sublimest theology, and yet no response will be heard. We may sit at the feet of men inspired of the Holy Ghost, and all they can tell us is, "it doth not yet appear." We may go to God, in earnest supplication, and the reply to our petitions is, "Have faith."

Indeed, to describe a glorified intellect is to possess it. To be able to delineate its divine excellences and vast capacities, would be proof that we had passed out of this present state of being, — that we had already exchanged the earthly for the heavenly. Let us, then, be content to walk about our spiritual Zion; for we cannot enter in. The gates are closed. The great King hath not sent for us yet. Death has not yet received his commission to release us, — to take off these material clogs, and let the spirit rise. We may meditate without, profitably. We may "mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces." We may make sure that "this God is our God," and that "he will be our guide even unto death." Then we shall be like him. Then we shall renew our strength, and "mount up with wings as eagles." The gates will open, and the splendors of immortality will burst upon the new powers and capacities of the soul.

And not only shall we be overwhelmed with these brilliant scenes, but our faculties will be such as will

enable us to see Christ as he is. We shall not behold him through vague types and dim shadows, but in all his glory, — in the full effulgence of his divine perfections. Yet this language must be qualified; for, with all our accession of vitality, capacity and glory, we shall still be finite; and no finite can comprehend the infinite. To whatever heights the Supreme Intelligence may elevate us, there will yet remain a measureless gulf between the Creator and the creature. The Highest must still stoop to bestow his blessings. Communion with us, on his part, must still be condescension. And down to the latest ages, if there can be latest ages in eternity, the inquiry will still run along the ranks of the most gifted and elevated of the heavenly hosts, “Who by searching can find out God; who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?” We must be infinite, to comprehend the infinite. We must be gods, to fully know God. And yet we may with strict propriety say that when we awake in his likeness, we shall behold his *full* effulgence and glory; for it will be full to us. It will fill every capacity, and satisfy every desire. And to whatever heights the law of progress, in its eternal operation, may carry us, we shall still be overpowered with views of the divine excellence and glory. In our estimation, infinite will be piled upon infinite, like Alps upon Alps.

When we consider how contracted our minds are here, how limited our sphere of vision, how faint our impressions of the Deity, we are struck with the immensity of the change that is to be wrought in us. We cannot grasp it, nor comprehend it. It is like converting dew-drops into oceans, pebbles into worlds, the dust floating in a sunbeam into stars of the first magnitude, destined to shine for ever and ever. And although the thought is noble, exciting, stimulating, yet there is also something awful in this aspiration to be like God. There is a fearful grandeur in the idea of seeking and expecting a resemblance to the Infinite One, the great I Am! And there is a sense in which a desire to be like God is impious. The haughty Prince of Tyre was severely rebuked by the prophet, because he set his "heart as the heart of God." The threat was uttered, "Behold, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom," &c., Ezekiel xxv. 6 and 7. The first transgression arose from a desire to "be as gods;" and the very essence of sin is to seek a supremacy over the Supreme Being.

But a proper imitation of God is a matter of command and duty. It is required of us by the Sovereign, as evidence of our loyalty. It is required by the Creator, as proof of our respect and rever-

ence. It is required by our Heavenly Father, as proof of our affection.

The likeness to the Deity that we anticipate, will also be a *moral likeness*. We shall resemble God in holiness, in benevolence, in perfect love. “We shall see him as he is,” and this will be enough to kindle in the soul the most intense desires to be like him in those moral attributes which are the chief ornament and glory of his character. As the sun, on rising above the horizon, dissipates the darkness of night, and turns all the objects it illumines, as it were, into light, — reflections of its own brightness and glory, — so the Sun of Righteousness assimilates to itself all the beings upon which it shines, imparting to them a divine lustre. A vision of God’s holiness transforms the soul into the same element; — obliterates all impurity, spiritualizes what before was carnal, and chases away every cloud of scepticism. A view of his majesty brings every faculty and desire into sweet subjection to his will. A sight of his infinite love renders the beholder lovely. The whole constellation of his virtues, shining down at once upon the redeemed spirit, fills it with a glory that will never grow dim.

And this moral likeness will be to the saint a source of infinite felicity. He will feel that sin, the cause of all corruption, danger and wretchedness, is forever banished from his soul; that it will no

more blast his virtues, no more peril his hopes, no more cripple his energies, shatter his good resolutions, open upon his spirit the flood-gates of atheism. He is now free, gloriously free. The monster is slain, is dead, without the possibility of a resurrection. The battle is fought; the victory won.

Well does the Psalmist exclaim, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." Satisfied? The word is too feeble, too inexpressive. And yet it is the best that the language affords. *Satis facio*, to make enough, to gratify desire *to its full extent*. And if this is done, the bounds of possibility are reached. Omnipotence can do no more than satisfy every desire.

But we would look at this moral likeness a little more carefully. It consists not simply in the absence of sin, but in the presence of positive holiness. It is a vital, living, soul-pervading, soul-transforming principle, that inclines one to love all that is excellent, pure, and lovely. It leads one to seek the society of holy angels, and a holy God. The glorified saint desires to enter the divine Shechinah, the presence-chamber of the great King, the place where his honor dwelleth. He desires to breathe its pure atmosphere, to experience its sacred influences, to draw near to the fountain of light, and life, and all blessedness; to feel the pulsations of that great cen-

tral heart, that sends its streams of benevolence to the furthest extremities of the universe.

This holiness has so penetrated his nature, as to become a part of his being, as really as light is part of the sun, or oxygen is a part of the atmosphere. It has taken complete possession of the spirit, and regulates every faculty, gives exercise to every power, and reigns over the motives, desires and purposes, of the soul.

There is no more any conflict, — no warring of the flesh against the spirit. A blessed peace reigns. A calm felicity like a summer-cloud rests upon the soul. And, as the capacities of the mind expand, there is a corresponding increase of holiness. Indeed, there is in holiness itself a power that acts mightily upon the intellect and heart. It gives clearness to the mental vision; it gives extent and compass to the power of thought; it creates ideas; it creates as well as satisfies desires; it calls forth the affections, and fills the heart with a glowing love, that waters cannot quench, nor floods drown.

There is another feature of this likeness of the glorified saint to the Deity. He will be like him in happiness. He will have access to all the sources and rivers of delight, that contribute to swell the ocean of divine felicity.

God will open before him his works, and bid him look abroad upon the magnificence and splendors of

creation. Worlds upon worlds, stars upon stars, systems piled upon systems, will pass in review before him. He will understand and realize why at the dawn of the creation “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

He will view, too, the government and providence of God. That mighty system of moral forces and instrumentalities, that sustains the divine authority, will open before him, in all its stupendous machinery and glorious ends. He will rejoice that he is under the protection of such a government, — will rejoice in its wise sanctions and infinite rewards. He will sympathize with the great Ruler in its equitable administration, and participate with him in the glory of its successful operation in every part of the habitable universe. He will find happiness in the ideas and sentiments of the Godhead. Having a similarity of taste, feeling and purpose, he will covet the society of the Deity, and will exclaim, with an emphasis never experienced on earth, “In thy presence there is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” He will know what it is “to sit together” with prophets, apostles, martyrs, and hosts of the redeemed, “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

And O, what floods of joy will fill the soul, when the saint awakes to the full consciousness, that the

resources of God's boundless universe are at his command! What rapture will thrill every sensibility of his nature, when he fully realizes that he has reached those glorious heights for which he had been so long toiling, — that he has received the crown after which he had been striving, — that he is an inhabitant of that celestial city, to which he had for so many years prayed, and struggled, to be admitted!

“ When, on Devotion's seraph wings, the spirit soars above,
And feels thy presence, Father, Friend, God of eternal love,
Joys of the earth, ye fade and die before that living ray,
Which gives to the rapt soul a glimpse of pure and perfect day, —
A gleam of heaven's own light, though now its brightness scarce
appears,
Through the dim shadows which are spread around this vale of tears!
But thine unclouded smile, O God, fills that all-glorious place,
'Where we shall know as we are known, and see thee face to face.' ”

VI.

RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

“There appeared unto them Elias, with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.” — MARK IX. 4.

“That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” — COLOSSIANS I. 28.

WE are free to acknowledge that, in the views we entertain of heavenly recognition, the feelings of the heart may sensibly affect the opinions of the intellect. The stream of the affections may mingle in with the current of reason and evidence, and give, perhaps, a strong coloring to the belief, that we shall know our earthly friends when we meet them in the heavenly world. For, when called to part with them here, — when forced, by a stern and inevitable necessity, to bid farewell to those with whom we have held sweet converse on earth, and around whom our warmest affections are entwined, — the heart cannot admit, for a moment, the sentiment that we shall never see or know them again. We instinctively follow them, in thought, to the bright regions above, and anticipate the pleasure of ere long meeting them in the society of the blessed, and participating with them in the employments

and joys of their Father's kingdom. They are not lost to us, but are only gone before ; and, with increased affection, will await our arrival at their blissful home. As the stars are not lost, when the morning sun throws his light over the firmament, but are simply invisible to our vision, so the spirits of the departed saints shine in the moral heavens, though we cannot see them with the natural eye. While we, with other mourners, are gathered around the lifeless form, so cold and desolate, — while we weep that the eye that often has beamed upon us with warm affection is now forever closed ; that the lips that have uttered words of kindness, are sealed in death, — the scene above presents a striking contrast to the sadness of this hour. There, happy angels are welcoming the spirit of the saint, and amid the smiles of the redeemed, the warm greetings of our elder brother, and the benediction of a reconciled Father, he enters upon the everlasting rest.

We cannot better introduce the subject of this article, than by quoting the beautiful and touching words of Montgomery, — words which have stirred the deepest and warmest emotions of many hearts :

Friend after friend departs ;

Who hath not lost a friend ?

There is no union here of hearts,

That finds not here an end.

Were this frail world our final rest,
Living or dying, none were blest.

Beyond the flight of time,
Beyond the reign of death,
There surely is some blessed clime
Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward and expire.

There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown ;
A long eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone ;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that glorious sphere.

Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away,
As morning high and higher shines,
To pure and perfect day ;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
But hide themselves in heaven's own light.

In advocating the doctrine of heavenly recognition, we would refer, for evidence in its favor, to the universal desire and expectation of mankind in regard to meeting their departed friends, and to the teachings of human reason. We would walk in the light that patriarchs, prophets and apostles, have shed upon the subject ; and especially would we sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him. We would seek wisdom from the wise and good, in different ages of the church, who have left on record

their opinions, and who themselves experienced the satisfaction and delight that the doctrine affords to every Christian heart. And though we may not be able to adduce many scriptural passages, that furnish direct and unqualified proof of the recognition of our friends in heaven, and though the nature of our evidence may not allow us to argue the question with mathematical precision and conclusiveness, yet we shall find testimony enough to satisfy the longings, and sustain the faith, of all the true disciples of Jesus.

I. The general hope and belief, among mankind, that they will know and love their friends in the future world, is a significant and important fact, in the history of this doctrine. It has been the universal sentiment among all classes, and in all ages of the world. Pagans and Mahometans, Jews and Gentiles, Papists and Christians, have alike had faith in it. It has shot as a gleam of light across the darkness of heathenism, and carried a few glimmerings of consolation to the bereaved and benighted pagan. In the midst of his superstitions, his moral debasement, his ignorance of the future life, he has yet, in his afflictions, found comfort in the twilight of this doctrine. While wandering amid the dark mountains of error and idolatry, he has heard the faint echoes of the voices of the departed. The Hindoo widow, while offering herself a sacrifice

upon the funeral pyre of her beloved husband, has been sustained by the expectation of meeting the departed in the spirit land. As the fires were kindled around her, and all earthly scenes were fading from her sight, she has anticipated a speedy union with her husband, in the paradise and spacious temples of her deities above.

The custom which has prevailed, for many ages, among some pagan nations, of sacrificing human victims, at the death of a prince, or chief, grew, obviously, out of the same idea. The spirits of the slain were supposed to accompany the prince, and serve him, and minister to his happiness, in the future world, as they had done in this. The practice, also, has prevailed, of sending messages by the dying, to friends who had been long dead; and among some heathen tribes, suicide has been encouraged and practised, under the desire of being released from the body, and enjoying the society of departed spirits.

Dr. Leland, in his work on the necessity of a divine revelation,* says, "In many parts of the world, where they held a life after this, the notion they had of it seems to have been, that it shall be a life perfectly like the present, with the same bodily

* As quoted by Harbaugh, in his "Heavenly Recognition;" a work to which I am happy to acknowledge my indebtedness for many of the quotations and arguments presented in this article.

wants, the same exercises and employments, and the same enjoyments and pleasures, which they had here. Hence it was, that among some nations it was customary for the women, the slaves, the subjects and friends of the deceased, to kill themselves, that in the other world they might serve those whom they loved and respected in this. Such was the practice among the ancient Danes, as Bartholinus informs us, in his *Danish Antiquities*."

Such a blind perversion of the sentiment under consideration, by the pagan heart, cannot but excite our pity and sorrow; and yet it indicates, in a striking and impressive manner, the strength of human affections, and the depth and power of the desire to continue, in the future life, the love which has been cherished in this. Nor can we but believe that this desire has been planted in the breast by the Creator, and that it is his design to afford scope in the coming life for the exercise of these same affections that are cultivated here. If it is a sentiment so deeply imbedded in humanity that even the errors and superstitions of heathenism cannot eradicate it, — if, as we shall see, it is found to be universal, existing under all forms of religion and shades of doctrine, surviving the various changes through which tribes and nations have passed, remaining after the loss of other truths, — we cannot for a moment suppose that it is delusion, that

and especially the feelings of Christian communities, we find the same hope and expectation prevailing. The eminent philosophers of Greece and Rome, without the light of Christianity, embraced this sentiment, and felt its influence in a dying hour. It has extended its sway from the institutions of learning, down, through all ranks, to the lonely cottage. It has consoled the dying Christian, in all nations and ages; and surviving friends, as they followed beloved ones to the cold and silent tomb, have been sustained by the cheering hope of meeting them again, and renewing their friendship in a brighter and better world.

The universality of this hope is certainly a strong argument in its favor; for, by the same process of reasoning, do we substantiate other important doctrines. In proving the existence of God, we derive a strong argument from the universality of the belief in a supreme and overruling deity. We find that all tribes and nations have some conception, more or less distinct, of God. With many, the idea is crude, and connected with notions, respecting his character and attributes, which are palpably erroneous; yet *the idea*, in some form, exists. It is imbedded in the consciousness of the human mind. It is reflected in the image in which man is created. It is developed in the feelings and sentiments of the heart. It is the universal voice of

humanity, coming up from every cottage, hamlet, city, nation, island and continent, "There is a God;" and the voice, being universal, commands our attention and our faith.

Associated with this idea is, also, the conception, in some of its aspects, of a divine moral government, which the Supreme Being has established over the world. Every man believes that he is under a system of laws to which penalties are attached. His consciousness of a principle within him, that points out the path of duty, — the self-approbation that he feels in view of right action, and the self-reproach that he experiences in view of wrong action, — keeps this idea of moral government constantly before his mind. He cannot shake it off. He cannot escape its influence. And from this fact, we derive a positive and powerful argument in proof of the existence of such a government.

So, in regard to a system of atonement. The idea is everywhere impressed upon the human heart, that sacrifice must be made for sin. This is the central force of paganism, and induces the multitude to bring their offerings to the altar, and the more ignorant and deluded to inflict upon themselves bodily torture.

In proving, also, the doctrine of immortality, we attach great importance to the universal belief in

a future state. Finding mankind everywhere entertaining this doctrine, and looking forward with more or less of hope to the future life, we argue that a God of infinite benevolence could not have planted such an expectation in the human breast, knowing that it would never be realized. He could not, from what we know of his character from the light of nature alone, have practised upon his rational creatures so gross a deception. And when we add to this evidence the light of revelation, the truth of the doctrine is placed beyond all dispute.

Indeed, "there is not one vital truth in divine revelation, concerning the whole race of man, that has not its likeness, though in mournful caricature and hideous burlesque, in the religious ideas of pagans. This proves, beyond all doubt, that, though the reason and logic of fallen humanity are false, its signs are true. The infinite wants, which lie in their constitution, reach after the truth."

Now, the same course of argument that we follow, in dealing with these fundamental truths, is equally applicable to the doctrine under consideration. And if we listen to the voice of universal humanity declaring the being of a God, the existence of a moral government, the necessity of an atoning sacrifice, and the doctrine of immortality, then should we also listen to that same voice, when it declares that we shall know and love, in another life, the Chris-

tian friends whom we have loved in this. But we should not overlook the fact, that, as Christianity advances, and its sanctifying and elevating influences affect the hearts of men, this doctrine advances. In proportion as the power of sin is broken, and the selfish principle dethroned, and man is brought under the dominion of benevolence and holiness, is the desire increased of recognizing and loving our friends in the future life. With the growth of all the Christian graces, with the culture of the religious affections, with the increase of spirituality, and of devotion to the cause of Christ, this hope brightens. The nearer we live to heaven, the more distinctly do we hear the voices of the departed, and see their angelic forms, as they walk around the gardens and temples of the celestial paradise. The eminent saint, whom fervent prayer and unwavering faith keep upon the mountain's summit, under the full sunshine of divine love, can almost hear the beloved ones calling him up to his heavenly home.

“ Come to the land of peace !
Come where the tempest hath no longer sway,
The shadow passes from the soul away,
The sounds of weeping cease !

Fear hath no dwelling there !
Come to the mingling of repose and love,
Breathed by the silent spirit of the dove
Through the celestial air !

Come to the bright and blest,
And crowned forever!—'midst that shining band,
Gathered to heaven's own wreath from every land,
Thy spirit shall find rest!

Thou hast been long alone;
Come to thy mother!—on the Sabbath shore,
The heart that rocked thy childhood back once more
Shall take its wearied one.

In silence wert thou left!
Come to thy sisters!—joyously again
All the home-voices, blest in one sweet strain,
Shall greet their long bereft.

Over thine orphan head
The storm hath swept, as o'er a willow's bough;
Come to thy father!—it is finished now;
Thy tears have all been shed.

In thy divine abode
Change finds no pathway, memory no dark trace;
And, O, bright victory!—death by love no place!
Come, spirit, to thy God!"

II. The doctrine which we are advocating is in accordance with human reason. Although it is declared that in the future life "we shall be changed," yet we have no evidences to believe, that the change will be such as to destroy all those distinctive features and peculiar characteristics by which we recognize each other on earth. Here, after a separation from our friends, for many years, during which they may have passed through great changes,

in appearance, manners and character, we are able to know them when we meet. Even those who had been our playmates in childhood are recognized in old age, and we take pleasure in recalling the incidents of our early history, and reviving associations connected with the sports and studies of youth. With many persons, the power of memory is so great as to enable them to recall every one with whom they had formed even a slight acquaintance. Now, can we suppose that so noble and powerful a faculty as the memory will be obliterated from the mind, when we shall have passed the boundaries of the grave? Or, can we suppose that there will be such a loss of every external feature, movement, expression, habit of thought, and peculiarity of character, as will preclude the possibility of one friend's knowing another? If memory is so tenacious in this life,—if we regard it as an important and binding duty to retain a warm affection for those here with whom we are connected by the ties of kindred, friendship or religion,—if this love is to us a source of so much interest and pleasure, can we suppose, for a moment, that death will forever sever these ties, and cut off this fountain of enjoyment?

We believe that our great mission, in this life, is to make preparation for the next,—that we are placed here to cultivate virtues which will be carried

to still higher perfection in another and nobler state of being. And among these virtues, we must regard not certainly as the least important, those which grow out of our relations with each other. The parent is prompted, by the natural instincts of the heart, to love his child, and promote his welfare. The child, from a sense of gratitude, is interested in the parent, and, if he is faithful, does all in his power to promote the parent's happiness, and make some returns for the kindness received. The family relation is instituted for the cultivation of the social affections, and in society we are made dependent one upon another, that mutual confidence, love and benevolence, may be called into exercise. And in proportion as the spirit of true piety reigns in the hearts and consciences of a community, do we find the social virtues developed. While sin tends to sever every tender tie, to suppress every noble impulse and generous emotion of our nature, holiness promotes the growth of the affections, and gives a sweetness and sacredness to human friendships.

Some of the most delightful intimacies on earth have been formed between those who have been brought together by a similarity of religious tastes and feelings. Having common temptations to resist, and trials to endure; accustomed to worship in the same sanctuary, and to mingle their prayers and praises in the same social circle; called to labor

together in the cause of Christ, they have formed a friendship which nothing could destroy. Especially where devoted Christians have been afflicted in a similar manner, by the loss of dear companions or children, have their sympathies drawn them together, and produced an attachment which has lasted to the close of life.

Is it not, then, reasonable to suppose, that the same religion which here so ennobles the social nature of man, — which elevates and sanctifies true friendship, — will, in a higher life, more fully develop the affections, and give greater intensity to our love? In seasons of affliction, when the saint mourns the loss of a devoted Christian friend, all the instincts of nature, and the feelings of the heart, favor the idea that the separation is only temporary, and that there will be a reünion in a brighter and purer world above. As the survivor lingers about the grave of the departed, this hope animates the soul, and helps to support it under its oppressive burden. The poet has beautifully described the emotions of the afflicted heart, in the following stanzas:

“ Oft weeping Memory sits alone,
Beside some grave, at even,
And calls upon some spirit flown,
O say, shall those on earth our own
Be ours again in heaven?

Amid these lone, sepulchral shades,
 Where sleep our dear ones riven,
 Is not some lingering spirit near,
 To tell if those divided here
 Unite and know, in heaven?

Shall friends who o'er the waste of life
 By the same storms are driven,
 Shall they recount, in realms of bliss,
 The fortunes and the tears of this,
 And love again, in heaven?

When hearts which have on earth been one
 By ruthless death are riven,
 Why does the one which death has reft
 Drag off in grief the one that's left,
 If not to meet in heaven?

The warmest love on earth is still
 Imperfect when 't is given ;
 But there's a purer clime above,
 Where perfect hearts in perfect love
 Unite ; and this is heaven.

If love on earth is but 'in part,'
 As light and shade at even, —
 If sin doth plant a thorn between
 The truest hearts, — there is, I ween,
 A perfect love, in heaven.

O, happy world ! O, glorious place !
 Where all who are forgiven
 Shall find their loved and lost below,
 And hearts, like meeting stream, shall flow,
 Forever one, in heaven."

III. We would next inquire into the teachings
 of the Holy Scriptures, upon this doctrine.

While, in the Old Testament especially, there is an absence of direct and unqualified declarations, respecting this question, yet there are allusions and expressions which indicate a belief in heavenly recognition, even among the Jews. The patriarchs, when dying, spoke of being gathered to their people, or to their fathers, while, also, giving directions respecting the burial of their bodies. Jacob, a short time previous to his death, said to his sons, "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers." Gen. xlix. 29. Then, at the close of the chapter, it is recorded, "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into his bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." It is said, too, of Abraham, that he "gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, and was gathered to his people." Isaac, also, "gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." Now, it is obvious, from this language, that the phrase, "gathered to his people," refers to something distinct from the burial of the body. In the case of Jacob, the sacred writer goes on to state the circumstances that followed his death; — the mourning of Joseph, the embalming of the body, and the interview with Pharaoh respecting the burial. And after the Egyptians had mourned for him "three-

score and ten days," "Joseph went up to bury his father." Thus, forty days after Jacob was "gathered to his people," the rites of his burial were performed. In his dying hour, while bidding farewell to earthly scenes, and to his children, who stood around him, he felt consoled by the thought, that he was going to mingle with his sainted ancestors, and participate with them in the enjoyments of the spirit world.

When Moses, the illustrious leader of the Children of Israel, had accomplished his mission, God said to him, "Get thee up unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people." This language cannot be regarded as synonymous with "being buried with his fathers;" for we are informed that Moses was "buried in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Thus the holy patriarchs and eminent servants of God, one after another, passed away, and joined the glorious company who waited at the gates of the celestial city to welcome them to their everlasting home.

The opinion which we are advocating is confirmed by Jahn, in his *Archæology*, § 203. He says, "The Hebrews regarded life as a journey, — as a pilgrim-

age on the face of the earth. The traveller, as they supposed, when he arrived at the end of this journey, which happened when he died, was received into the company of his ancestors, who had gone before him. * * * Opinions of this kind are the origin and ground of such phrases as the following To be gathered to one's people; to go to one's fathers. This visiting of the fathers has reference to the immortal part, and is clearly distinguished from the mere burial of the body."

The Psalmist David evidently believed in the doctrine of heavenly recognition, and found comfort in it, when bereaved of those whom he dearly loved. While his child was sick, and he was bowed down under the weight of his affliction, he fasted and wept, and pleaded with God to spare the life of the child. But, when the child died, he arose from the earth, and required his servants to set bread before him, "and he did eat." They, astonished at his conduct, sought an explanation of it, when he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me." How beautiful and touching are the words of this bereaved father, who, though living in the twilight of spiritual knowledge, was yet full

of confidence that he would again meet his departed child! While the object of his affections yet lived, and there remained a ray of hope that he might recover, he used every means in his power to save him. All that the love of a father, the piety of a saint, or the power of a king, could do, was done, to secure the child's restoration to health. But the moment that the child dies, the father plants himself, with implicit faith, upon the doctrine of heavenly recognition. As he gazes upon the cold, silent form, of the departed, he feels that this is not the child, but that he lives in higher and purer regions, where he will one day meet him, and again hear his voice, receive his smiles, and experience his love. "I shall go to him." "After the trials and toils of this life are over, I shall depart, and be reunited to the beloved one."

How many fathers, in similar circumstances, have felt the consoling influence of this hope, and been sustained by the anticipation of a reünion in that world where there is no more pain, sickness, sorrow, or death!

The following touching verses are expressive of a bereaved father's tenderness and hope. They are entitled

MY CHILD.

I *cannot* make him dead!
His fair, sunshiny head,
Is ever bounding round my study-chair;

Yet, when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes—he is not there!

I walk my parlor-floor,
And, through the open door,
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair;
I'm stepping toward the hall,
To give the boy a call,
And then bethink me that—he is not there!

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin-lid;
Closed are his eyes, cold is his forehead fair;
My hand that marble felt,
O'er it in prayer I knelt,
Yet my heart whispers that—he is not there!

I cannot *make* him dead!
When passing by the bed
So long watched over with parental care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that—he is not there!

When, at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,
Whate'er I may be *saying*,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, though—he is not there!

Not there! Where, then, is he?
—The form I used to see
Was but the *raiment* that he used to wear.
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked;—*he* is not there!

He lives ! In all the past,
 He lives ; nor, to the last,
 Of seeing him again will I despair ;
 In dreams I see him now,
 And on his angel brow
 I see it written, “Thou shalt see me *there* !”

Yes, we all live to God !
 FATHER, thy chastening rod
 So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
 That, in the spirit land,
 Meeting at thy right hand,
 'T will be our heaven to find that—he is *there* !

Passing from the Old Testament to the New, we find satisfactory, though not direct evidences, of the doctrine of heavenly recognition. Our blessed Saviour, in his intercourse with his disciples, and in the instructions which he gave to his followers, seems to take it for granted, that friendships and Christian ties which are formed on earth will be continued and perpetuated in heaven. He often, in communicating important truths, addressed the social nature of man, and employed imagery drawn from the family relation. God is presented to us as his father and our father. He himself is our elder brother. Heaven is our home, whither he has gone to prepare mansions for all true believers. To comfort his disciples, when about to be separated from them, he said, “Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. * * * If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again

and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." As expressive of the intimate and tender relations which he sustained to them, he said, "I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you."

In referring to the joys of heaven, he said, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Here the doctrine of recognition is distinctly acknowledged. The patriarchs, with the saints gathered from every part of the earth, are represented as feasting together, and enjoying social intercourse. And if an acquaintance may be formed with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, why may we not know the prophets, apostles, martyrs, the illustrious hosts of the redeemed, and those pious relatives and Christian friends with whom we have been associated on earth? Why may we not meet there St. Paul, Stephen, John the beloved disciple, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, and other distinguished saints?

The earnestness with which Christ urged upon his followers the duty of loving one another, indicates that their friendships would not terminate with death. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, *as I have loved you.*" The strong

affection and deep interest which he felt for them, he required that they should feel for each other. Among the Christian virtues, he set forth brotherly love, as one of the most prominent. He made the exercise of it an essential evidence of true faith, and as vital to the perpetuity and progress of his kingdom. Nor is there a more satisfactory and convincing proof of the genuine piety of believers, than the prevalence among them of true friendship and affection. "We know," says John, "that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death."

Now, such being the requisitions of the gospel, and such the tests of genuine religion in the soul, we have every reason to believe that these strong attachments which are formed on earth will be continued in heaven; that there our social enjoyments will be carried to a high state of perfection, and that contributing to the happiness of others will be a prominent source of felicity throughout eternity.

"The saints on earth, when sweetly they converse,
And the dear favors of kind Heaven rehearse,
Each feels the other's joys; both doubly share
The blessings which devoutly they compare.
If saints such mutual joy feel here below,
When they each other's heavenly foretastes know,
What joys transport them at each other's sight,
When they shall meet in empyreal height!
Friends, even in heaven, one happiness would miss,
Should they not know each other when in bliss."

The scene which occurred upon the mount, at the time of Christ's transfiguration, is full of instructions in regard to the question before us. It is thus described by St. Luke: "And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spoke of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." In this scene, all who were present are represented as knowing each other. Although Moses and Elias had left this world at periods so remote, yet they had become acquainted in heaven, and now they visited together the Lord of glory. They had doubtless watched the Saviour's career since he had been on the earth, and had been deeply interested in the progress of his mission. They had witnessed his trials, sympathized with him in his sufferings, and now they came to comfort and strengthen him for the last tragical scenes of his life. The disciples, though they were filled with astonishment at what they beheld, yet felt that it was delightful to be in such society. Peter exclaimed, "Master, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." He desired at once to

build habitations, that he might retain the illustrious visitants, and enjoy, as long as possible, sweet intercourse with them. But they soon took their flight back to their glorious abode, where now Peter, James and John, and all the apostles, are enjoying their society; and, instead of frail tabernacles, they are dwelling in a city "that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

The description which our Saviour gives of the final judgment, is also referred to by writers upon this subject, as proof of the doctrine of heavenly recognition. In answer to Peter's inquiries respecting the reward which awaited them in the future life, Christ said, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In this case, it is obvious that if the apostles are to occupy the distinguished position of judges, and discharge the duties connected with such an office, they must know each other, and those whose characters they are to examine. "Whatever may be the nature of their office, or in whatever manner it may be exercised, it must include the knowledge of individuals, and of their relation to the present world. In other words, the apostles must know the persons submitted to their jurisdiction to be the twelve tribes of Israel;

and it is equally plain that the Israelites must, on the other hand, be aware that their judges are the twelve apostles. But, if this be admitted, what should hinder the *individuals* of either party from becoming known to one another? And, in the face of such evidence, on what ground can the belief of a *general recognition* amongst friends be reasonably called in question?"

The apostles, from the language which they used in reference to the future life, evidently expected to know each other, and those whom they had been the means of converting to Christianity. They regarded heaven as a place, or state, where the social affections would be called into vigorous exercise; where the warm Christian friendships formed on earth would be continued; where they would be united, not only "to an innumerable company of angels," but "to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." They anticipated, with the greatest delight, the hour when "the whole family, in heaven and in earth," would meet in their Father's house, enjoy his smiles, and bow in adoration before his throne; when, amid the bright and innumerable multitude, they would recognize their "elder Brother," and be permitted to cast their crowns at his feet, and ascribe to him the

glory of their salvation ; when they would together gaze upon the splendors of their celestial home, and enter the glorious mansions prepared for them.

In one of the passages which we have quoted, at the commencement of this article, this doctrine is distinctly recognized. St. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, says, after referring to Christ as the hope of glory, “ Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that *we may present every man perfect* in Christ Jesus.” From this language, we learn that the apostle was stimulated to be faithful in the discharge of his duties by the anticipated pleasure of meeting his converts in the heavenly world, and presenting them to Christ, as the trophies of the power of a Saviour’s love. He wished to warn every man of the dangers of impenitence, and the consequences of apostasy ; and to teach them in all wisdom, instruct them thoroughly in the precepts and doctrines of Christianity, that he might present them perfect before the Redeemer’s throne.

In his epistle to the Thessalonians he says, “ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming ? For ye are our glory and joy.” Here the apostle distinctly affirms that those whom he is instrumental in turning to righteousness will be, at the coming of Christ, not only his “ hope,”

but his “joy and crown of rejoicing.” Macknight, in his able and learned commentary on the epistles, thus remarks upon this passage (page 408): “The manner in which the apostle speaks of the Thessalonians, in this passage, shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relations and friends then. And, as there is no reason to think, that in the future life we shall lose those natural and social affections, which constitute so great a part of our present enjoyments, may we not expect that these affections, purified from everything animal and terrestrial, will be a source of our happiness in that life likewise? It must be remembered, however, that, in the other world, we shall love one another, not so much on account of the relation and friendship that formerly subsisted between us, as on account of the knowledge and virtue that we possess; for, among rational beings, whose affections will all be suited to the high state of moral and intellectual perfection to which they shall be raised, the most endearing relations and warmest friendships will be those which are founded on excellence of character. What a powerful consideration this, to excite us to cultivate in our relations and friends the noble and lasting qualities of knowledge and virtue, which will prove such a source of happiness,

to them and to us, through the endless ages of eternity!"

There are other passages, in Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, equally decisive with those already adduced. The apostles fully expected to meet in heaven, not only those whom they had instructed, and over whom they had exercised a pastoral watch and care, but all with whom they had labored in the cause of Christ. Their companions in toil and suffering, — those with whom they had prayed, and wept, and struggled, in efforts to build up the Redeemer's kingdom, — they hoped to meet at the right hand of the Majesty on high. They believed that they would rejoice together in their victories, and shout with rapture in view of the pleasures of heavenly society that would open before them.

If we are faithful, we shall undoubtedly share with them in these blessings. The pastor will meet the beloved members of his flock, whom he has instructed in the duties and doctrines of our holy religion, and whose devotions he has led, Sabbath after Sabbath, in the sanctuary. Those, especially, whom he has been the means of converting, from the error of their ways, to "the truth as it is in Jesus," will be his joy and crown of rejoicing. The aged servant of God, who has for years ministered at the altar, whose whitened locks and venerable form indicate his nearness to the spirit world, —

who has stood by the dying bed of one parishioner after another, until an entire generation has passed before him into the eternal world, — shall renew his Christian friendships and sweet religious associations in another world, where there shall be no more partings forever. The father who has consecrated his children to God, and trained them for his service, will meet those of them who have believed in Jesus, amid the joys and raptures of a heavenly home. The bereaved Christian mother, who has laid away her infant child in the cold grave, will be reunited to its angel spirit in those pure and bright regions. Her feelings and hopes are sweetly expressed in the following lines by Montgomery, entitled

A MOTHER'S LAMENT.

I loved thee, daughter of my heart !
My child, I loved thee dearly ;
And, though we only met to part,
How sweetly ! how severely !
Nor life nor death can sever
My soul from thine forever.

Thy days, my little one, were few ;
An angel's morning visit,
That came and vanished with the dew, —
'T was here, 't is gone, — where is it ?
Yet didst thou leave behind thee
A clue for love to find thee.

The eye, the lip, the cheek, the brow,
The hands stretched forth in gladness,

And life, joy, rapture, beauty now,
 Then dashed with infant sadness ;
 Till, brightening by transition,
 Returned the fairy vision.

Where are they now, — those smiles, those tears,
 Thy mother's darling treasure ?
 She sees them still, and still she hears
 Thy tones of pain or pleasure,
 To her quick pulse revealing
 Unutterable feeling.

Sarah ! my last, my youngest love,
 The crown of every other !
 Though thou art born in heaven above,
 I am thine only mother ;
 Nor will affection let me
 Believe thou canst forget me.

Then, — thou in heaven, and I on earth, —
 May this one hope delight us,
 That thou wilt hail my second birth,
 When death shall reunite us,
 Where worlds no more can sever
 Parent and child forever !

IV. Some persons may suggest the inquiry, What views have our standard theologians entertained upon this subject ? What opinions have those men held who have been most deeply imbued with the spirit of Christianity, — who have devoted their lives to the investigation of truth, and to whom we have been accustomed to look for wisdom and instruction ?

In reply, we are able to furnish the most satis-

factory evidence that they not only believed in this doctrine, but cherished it with the greatest fondness, and found in it a rich source of consolation and joy to their own hearts.

From among many testimonies, I would select a few ; and these are quoted from Harbaugh's able and excellent work on "Heavenly Recognition," already referred to.

I. REV. DR. EDWARDS.

It is reasonable to believe that the saints shall know that they had such and such a relation to one another, when they were on the earth. The father shall know that such a one was his child ; the husband shall remember that such a one was his wife ; the scriptural guide shall know that such belonged to his flock ; and so all other relations of persons shall be renewed and known in heaven. The ground of which assertion is this, — that the soul of man is of that nature that it depends not on the body and sense, and, therefore, being separated, knows all that it knew in the body. And, for this reason, it is not to be doubted that it arrives in the other world with the same desires and inclinations that it had here ; so that the delights of conversation are continued in heaven. Friends and relations are familiar and free with one another, and call to mind their former circumstances and concerns, in

the world, so far as they may be serviceable to advance their happiness.

II. DR. GEORGE CHRISTIAN KNAPP.

According to the representations contained in the Holy Scriptures, the saints will dwell together in the future world, and form, as it were, a kingdom, a state, of God. They will there partake of a common felicity. Their enjoyment will doubtless be very much heightened by friendship, and by their confiding intercourse with each other. We must, however, separate all earthly imperfection from our conceptions of this heavenly society. But that we shall there recognize our former friends, and shall be again associated with them, was uniformly believed by all antiquity. The idea was admitted as altogether rational, and as a consoling thought, by the most distinguished ancient philosophers. Even reason regards this as in a high degree probable; but to one who believes the Holy Scriptures, it cannot be a matter of doubt and conjecture.

III. REV. JOHN DICK, D. D.

It has been asked whether, in this blessed abode, the saints will know one another? One should think that the question was unnecessary, as the answer naturally presents itself to every man's mind; and it could only have occurred to some

dreaming theologian, who, in his airy speculations, has soared far beyond the sphere of reason and common sense. Who can doubt whether the saints will know one another? What reason can be given why they should not? Would it be any part of their perfection to have all their former ideas obliterated, and to meet as strangers, in the other world? Would it give us a more favorable notion of the assembly in heaven to suppose it to consist of a multitude of unknown individuals, who never hold communication with each other, or by some inexplicable restraint are prevented, amidst an intimate intercourse, from mutual discoveries? Or have they forgotten what they themselves were, so that they cannot reveal it to their associates? What would be gained by this ignorance, no man can tell; but we can tell what would be lost by it. They would lose all the happiness of meeting again, on the peaceful shore, those from whom they were separated by the storms of life; of seeing among the trophies of divine grace many of whom they had despaired, and for whose sake they had gone down with sorrow to the grave; of knowing the good which they had been honored to do, and being surrounded with the individuals who had been saved by means of their prayers, and instructions, and labors. How could those whom he had been the instrument of converting and building up in the holy faith be,

to the minister of the gospel, a crown of joy and rejoicing, in the day of the Lord, if he did not recognize them when standing at his side?

IV. REV. J. W. NEVIN, D. D.

That the saints in glory shall continue to know those whom they have known and loved on earth, seems to me to flow necessarily from the idea of their mortality itself; for this cannot be real except as it includes personal identity, or a continuation of the same consciousness. It is, moreover, a strictly catholic idea, the sense of which has been actively present to the mind of the church, through all ages, in her doctrines of the "Communion of the Saints." This regards not merely Christians on earth, but also the sainted dead, according to the true word of the hymn, "The saints on earth, and all the dead, but *one communion* make." But communion implies a continuity of reciprocal knowledge and affection. If death sundered absolutely the new consciousness of the believer from the old, there could be no real spiritual conjunction of this sort between the living and the departed members of Christ's body. There is a dangerous tendency in the religious world, at the present time, towards a false view of this relation, by which, in fact, the dead are taken to be so dissociated from the living as to have no part further in the onward movement

of Christ's kingdom. But this is an error full as bad, to say the least, as the old superstition of invoking the saints and praying for the dead. The communion of saints, now noticed, has regard, of course, to the order of things between death and the resurrection. But, if we are required to believe that disembodied spirits, in the middle state, still retain their interest in those they have left behind, then in the mortal state, how shall we question their power of recognition afterwards, in the more perfect resurrection state, when those who are now in two different states (and still in communion) shall be all gloriously brought together again in one?

V. REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

I must confess, as the experience of my soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought that I should never know them, and, consequently, never love them, after this life is ended, I should in reason number them as temporal things, and love them as such. But I now delight to converse with my pious friends, in the firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever; and I take comfort in those of them that are dead or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love that shall there be perfected.

VI. DR. DODDRIDGE.

Let me be thankful for the pleasing hope, that though God loves my child too well to permit it to return to me, he will ere long bring me to it. And then that endeared paternal affection, which would have been a cord to tie me to earth, and have added new pangs to my removal from it, will be as a golden chain to draw me upwards, and add one further charm and joy to paradise itself.

VII. REV. J. F. BERG, D. D.

Go where we will, we find the sentiment, that friendship is perpetuated beyond the grave. It is enshrined in the heart of our common humanity. The pure, unsophisticated belief of the vast majority of the followers of Christ is in union with the yearnings of natural affection, which follows its object through the portals of the grave into the eternal world. What but this causes the Christian parent, in the dying hour, to charge his beloved children to prepare for a reünion before the throne of the Lamb? He desires to meet them there, and to rejoice with them in the victory over sin and death. The widow, bending in bitter bereavement over the grave of him whom God has taken, meekly puts the cup of sorrow to her lips, with the assured confidence that the separation wrought by death is transient, and that they who sleep in Jesus shall together inherit the

rest that remaineth for the people of God. Thus the wormwood and the gall are tempered by the sweet balm of hope, and heaven wins the attraction which earth has lost. Tell me, ye who have seen the open tomb receive into its bosom the sacred trust committed to its keeping, in hope of the first resurrection, — you who have heard the sullen rumbling of the death-clods, as they dropped upon the coffin-lid, and told you that earth had gone back to earth, — when the separation from the object of your love was realized in all the desolation of bereavement, next to the thought that ere long you should see Christ as he is, and be like him, was not that consolation the strongest which assured you that the departed one, whom God has put from you into darkness, will run to meet you, when you cross the threshold of immortality, and, with the holy rapture to which the redeemed alone can give utterance, lead you to the exalted Saviour, and with you bow at his feet, and cast the conqueror's crown before Him?

VIII. DR. THOMAS CHALMERS.

Tell us if Christianity does not throw a pleasing radiance around an infant's tomb? And should any parent who hears us, feel softened by the remembrance of the light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period

expired, we cannot think that we venture too far when we say, that he is only to persevere in the faith, and in the following of the Gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk, has been transplanted there to a place of endurance ; and it will there gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection which has been sorely wounded ; and, in the name of Him who, if on earth, would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present to sorrow, not even as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the hope of that country where there is no sorrow, and no separation.

Such is the language of our eminent divines upon the question before us. We might add to the list of witnesses in favor of the doctrine of heavenly recognition, but enough has been said to exhibit the views and feelings of those distinguished servants of the church, in whose piety and wisdom we repose the fullest confidence.

We are aware that objections have been raised against our doctrine. But a sentiment so deeply imbedded in the human heart, and so strongly entwined around the warmest affections and sympathies; as this, — one that is sustained by reason and by the general desire and expectation of mankind ;

one that is recognized by Christ and his apostles, and believed in by the great majority of devoted Christians, and distinguished divines, — is not easily to be set aside or weakened. It is our privilege to cling to it, to find consolation in it in seasons of bereavement, to derive comfort from it in a dying hour, and to anticipate the pleasure of meeting, in “the general assembly and church of the first born,” our beloved Christian friends, and of enjoying their society forever! We shall with them wander amid the bowers and streams of a heavenly paradise, walk with them the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, enter with them the temples dedicated to celestial worship, and sing with them the songs of redeeming love!

A doctrine sustained by such evidence, and so full of rich consolation, should have a practical bearing upon every Christian heart. It should lead us to cultivate a warm affection, not only for those to whom we are bound by natural ties, but for all the disciples of Christ. It is the design of the gospel to unite all mankind in one common brotherhood, — to bind them together by common sympathies, interests, and affections. The law under which we pass our Christian lives is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And this law aims at the destruction and annihilation of the selfish principle in the human heart. It breaks down avarice, and

leads to the culture of the widest benevolence. It destroys the feelings of prejudice and revenge, and fills the soul with the spirit of kindness and forgiveness. It brings us, in fact, under the dominion of the principle that regulates the society of heaven. If, then, we obey the law of Christianity, we shall love one another, and do all in our power to promote each other's interests and happiness.

This doctrine is full of encouragement and stimulus to the Christian minister. How delightful to him to anticipate meeting, in the streets of the New Jerusalem, those who have been saved through his instrumentality! To be able to witness their joys, to recognize their voices in the song of redeeming love, to behold them amid the splendors and glories of an immortal paradise, how intense the satisfaction! How glorious to have such "stars" in one's "crown of rejoicing"! Here is indeed a motive for faithfulness, that should arouse and thrill every pastor's heart.

To the bereaved, this doctrine comes to heal their wounds and soothe their anguish. It bids them hasten their preparation for a higher life, and for sweeter and holier Christian intercourse than this earth can afford. Their departed Christian friends wait, with fond anticipations of delight, their arrival in the spirit world. Bending over the battlements of the celestial city, they beckon to them to come home.

We cannot close better than by quoting the beautiful words of Leggett, on “Reunion Above.”

If yon bright stars, which gem the night,
Be each a blissful dwelling-sphere,
Where kindred spirits reunite,
Whom death hath torn asunder here,
How sweet it were at once to die,
To leave this blighted orb afar,—
Mixt soul and soul, to cleave the sky,
And soar away from star to star !

But, O ! how dark, how drear and lone,
Would seem the brightest world of bliss,
If, wandering through each radiant one,
We failed to find the loved of this !
If there no more the ties shall twine,
Which death's cold hand alone could sever,
Ah, then those stars in mockery shine,
More hateful as they shine forever !

It cannot be !—each hope, each fear,
That lights the eye or clouds the brow,
Proclaims there is a happier sphere
Than this bleak world that holds us now.
There is a voice which sorrow hears,
When heaviest weighs life's galling chain,
'Tis heaven that whispers, “Dry your tears ;
The pure in heart *shall meet again*.”

VII.

NO MORE SEA.

“And there was no more sea.” — REVELATION XXI. 1.

THIS remarkable declaration has excited the attention and curiosity of many of the readers of the Apocalypse. The inquiry has been made, why a circumstance like this should appear in a heavenly vision, and be deemed of sufficient importance to be recorded by an inspired pen. In the hints and descriptions which are given of the future world, it is not always easy to determine what is to be taken literally, and what figuratively; and this difficulty has occasioned, in a great measure, the diversity of opinion which prevails respecting the meaning of various passages relating to this subject.

But, whatever may be the precise import of these words, they suggest to the mind several features of “the new heavens and new earth,” upon which we may meditate with pleasure and benefit.

In the first place, we learn from this language, that there will be, in that blessed abode, no changes or vicissitudes in the condition of the saints.

The sea is the emblem of change. It is never perfectly at rest. The ebb and flow of the tides, the various currents passing through it, the changes in the temperature of the atmosphere, keep it constantly in motion. It fluctuates with every passing breeze, yields to every impression, and is disturbed by a thousand different causes. At one moment it lies perfectly calm and placid, with not a ripple upon its bosom;—its silvery surface reflects every object along the shore. It is a mirror to the skies, to the pale moon, the stars, and the clouds. It seems, at such an hour, the emblem of peace and security. It invites the voyager to trust to its waters, and to float quietly upon its placid bosom. But soon a change steals over the scene. The breeze springs up, and slightly agitates the waters. A dark cloud is seen rising in the distant horizon. The muttering of an approaching storm is heard. Dim shadows begin to fill the air, and the howl of the tempest breaks the silence of the hour. How rapidly, now, does the beauty of the scene change to wild sublimity! How sudden the transition from security to the most imminent danger,—from feelings of delightful admiration to indescribable terror!

As such, the sea affords a vivid picture of human life. Change, instability and disappointment, are inscribed upon everything pertaining to our earthly

existence. The hopes and prospects of the individual fluctuate. A thousand invisible influences are working upon him, affecting his character, moulding his opinions, and strengthening or weakening good principles. The Christian is at one time on the mount, in the enjoyment of perfect serenity. The pure atmosphere around him diffuses through his system the glow of spiritual health. He gazes with delight upon the wide and beautiful prospect that opens before him. But the next hour he is in the valley, oppressed with cruel doubts and distressing fears. His bright hopes have all fled. The beautiful prospect is shut out from his view, and the mountains, that had lifted him to the skies, become a dark rampart around him.

Families, too, are subject to constant changes. Not a day nor an hour passes in which some circle is not broken by death. The tenderest ties are severed; the fondest anticipations of happiness are suddenly blasted. The father who but yesterday gazed with pride and affection upon his fair boy, participating in his sports, and rejoicing in his progress and culture, to-day follows his cold remains to the silent grave. The wife, by one fatal stroke, is deprived of her companion and protector, and is left to battle life's stern realities alone.

Communities and nations are constantly changing. From our churches, from the marts of business, and

the halls of pleasure, multitudes are daily withdrawing, while others are stepping in to take their places. Upon the throngs that we encounter in the streets, upon the crowds that gathered to listen to the eloquence of the orator or the sweet strains of music, upon the mightiest armies and most densely populated cities, there is written, "passing away."

The continents are covered with the monuments and burial-places of dead empires. As one wave follows another upon the sea, so generation follows generation, each in its turn breaking and dashing upon the shores of eternity.

The moral condition of the world has been emphatically one of change. It has been like a restless, boisterous ocean, with its dangerous currents, its quicksands, fatal rocks and fearful whirlpools. Strong temptations, violent passions, and the influx of various forms of error and infidelity, have spread their disturbing influences over the entire moral world.

But, in the vision that St. John had of the new heavens and the new earth, he tells us "there was no more sea." All there is permanent, and unalterably settled. Not a wave or ripple ever agitates the surface of celestial purity and felicity. The saints, having passed through their last great change, know no other change but progress in holiness and happiness. Their mansions are neither built upon

the sand nor float upon treacherous billows, but rest upon the solid rock. No more doubts shake their faith; no more currents of worldly influences impede their progress in the divine life; no more weary watchings for the beacon-lights of hope are endured. The dim visions of future happiness have opened into glorious realities. The voyage of human life is passed, and the happy spirits have reached the haven of rest. They enjoy the protection and blessing of the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In the next place, the sea reminds us of privations, trials and hardships, none of which are experienced in the heavenly world. What multitudes, upon the ocean, are cut off from the refined enjoyments of social life, the blessings of domestic intercourse, and the privileges of Christian worship. No sacred temples line the pathways upon the ocean; no Sabbath church-bell summons the mariner to the holy sanctuary. The voice of the preacher, the stirring notes of praise, the swell of the organ, reach not his ears. Arduous duties may claim his attention, or great dangers may surround him, during the hallowed hours of public prayer and worship. Thus, deprived of the religious advantages and aids enjoyed by others, he often has no God to worship, no altar before which he bows, no Saviour in whom he trusts, no Holy Spirit to enlighten, comfort and bless him.

Nor is he any more favored in intellectual advantages. No institution of learning offers its treasures of knowledge to those whose home is on the sea. There is, indeed, upon the ocean, an education that is in many respects peculiar, and in some sublime. The dark, rolling waves, as they rise from their unfathomed cavern homes, tell of His power "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand." The wide expanse, stretching in every direction as far as the eye can reach, teaches the infinitude of the divine Being. The midnight tempest announces, in solemn and awful tones, that there is a Sovereign above, in whose estimation "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Everything around the mariner teaches him of the power and majesty of Jehovah; and would he but listen, he might hear voices that would instruct him in his duty and his destiny. But there are other educational influences that too often obtain the mastery over him. Confined to a companionship that is hostile not only to mental development, but to moral culture, — deprived of those healthful stimulants and religious restraints that surround others, — he has but little chance of escaping the debasement of his intellectual powers, and the destruction of his moral principles.

These privations and dangers, inseparable from a life at sea, occasion the deepest anxieties, and often

keenest sorrows, upon the land. Here is a mother whose son is far away upon the mighty deep. With what strong affection and intense solicitude does she follow her boy, in his pathless track upon the waves ! Perhaps he is an only child, and one in whom all the hopes of a fond mother centre. In the quiet hours of night, when past scenes crowd around the memory, and stand before the mind as present realities, she thinks of him, prays for him, pleads with the God of the ocean to protect him. She reflects upon the care with which he was cherished in infancy, — the interest with which she watched his opening faculties and powers, — the toil and patience expended in planting in him right principles, and qualifying him for usefulness and happiness. All the incidents of his departure rise up before her imagination. His preparation for the voyage, his enterprise, his noble bearing, his last farewell, — the tear of affection, that, in spite of his efforts, started in his eye, as he grasped a mother's hand, — come thronging around her memory ; and in that hallowed hour she tries to picture to herself his situation. Perhaps he is exposed to powerful temptations, and all her care and labor to fortify him, in early life, against such assaults, are to be sacrificed in one fatal hour. Perhaps he is lying in his narrow, gloomy apartment, prostrated by severe sickness, with no kind friend to cool his fevered brow, no mild voice

to whisper words of encouragement and hope. Perhaps he is encountering his first storm at sea, and his young heart throbs as its fierce howl sweeps by him. Perhaps he is aloft, striving with one hand to lash to the yard the fluttering sail, while with the other he clings for his life to the treacherous rope. He is, at least, far away ; and, whatever dangers may surround him, she cannot go to him, — cannot help him, except by her prayers.

How many have fathers upon the sea, whom they revere and love, — whose toils they would gladly lighten, whose dangers they would gladly share ! When bowing around the family altar, they remember him. While engaged in their daily duties, they think of his kindness, and of the tokens of his love that he has brought from distant climes. In every disaster or shipwreck of which they read, their thoughts revert to him, with the hope that he is safe. The possibility that he is exposed to dangers, — that they may never see him again, — may no more experience his warm greetings, — comes like an arrow to the heart.

How many have beloved companions upon the ocean, concerning whom the deepest anxiety is felt ! For a long time, no tidings of the absent have been received. Days, weeks and months, drag heavily on, leaving behind them only hope. A heart full of affection is kept in cruel suspense. A wreck has

been seen. Perhaps it is all that remains of the missing ship and its gallant crew. The evidences for and against this opinion are weighed with scrupulous exactness. Every circumstance is examined with the most intense and painful interest. And not unfrequently the mind for years is kept in a state more agonizing, and more wasting to the spirits, than would be produced by a knowledge of the certain death of the departed.

How little, after hearing of a wreck, and of the sad fate of all on board the ship, do we realize that there were sons, fathers and husbands, in that struggling, gasping group, — that those lifeless forms were bound to friends by ties as strong and tender as those that unite us to the dearest objects of our affection! How little do we think of the families, in different towns and villages, to whom the announcement of the wreck comes as a thunderbolt, — whose sighs, and tears, and habiliments of mourning, tell where the lightning of affliction has struck!

Is there not a depth and intensity of meaning, to such, in the declaration of St. John, that in the heavenly world there is no more sea, — no more separation from dear friends, — no more nights of weary watchings and deep agony, — no more startling intelligence of the loss of those we love?

The sea is the emblem of all life's trials. Its ceaselessly rolling billows shadow forth the agitations

of many hearts. Its roar is the echo of the groans of an afflicted world. Its perils are emblematic of the moral dangers that surround the soul of man. We are all upon the ocean. Every human being has his voyage to make, his dangers to encounter. Many a dark wave lies between us and the haven of rest. We have barks freighted with more precious substances than silver or gold. The merchant may lose his ships. The sea may engulf his property, and leave him a bankrupt. This is a calamity. But greater calamities threaten many voyagers now sailing upon the ocean of life. They are attempting to make the passage without noticing the compass, whose needle points to the throne of God, and with no pilot at the helm. They seldom consult their chart, that marks out the only course by which they can reach the celestial city, — that indicates the rocks and dangers of the way. They heed not the beacon-lights held forth by patriarchs, prophets and apostles. Though the forms of these holy messengers may be seen moving along the shore, with torches in their hands, — though their voices may be heard amid the roar of the waters, warning the careless mariner of the dangers that surround him, pleading with him to escape the wild breakers that have swallowed up thousands of human beings, — yet he heeds them not. Bent upon his pleasures, absorbed by his schemes for transient good, he thinks that it

will be time enough to arouse himself when the peril is more apparent. He sees that his ship is strong. Every timber is sound; every plank is bolted with iron. He looks above, and every mast, spar, sail and rope, is in its place. What need of alarm, when everything appears so secure? Thus reasons the man in health and prosperity. But suddenly the alarming tidings ring through the cabin, that the ship has struck, and is fast upon the rocks. Now, in the panic of the hour, the voyager runs to his chart; but this cannot help him. He looks at his compass; but it points whither he cannot go. He seizes the helm; but its power is gone. He pleads for deliverance; but there comes from the shore a voice, "Too late." He lifts his agonizing cry to God for mercy; but he hears the dreadful response, "Ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

O! is it not a blessed announcement, that there is a world where no such moral danger will surround the soul,—where no waves of temptation will roll over us, and no sea of sorrow endanger our hopes or our happiness?

In the next place, we are assured, by the declaration before us, that no storms will arise in the home of the blessed.

The sea is emphatically the theatre of storms. Here they rage with their greatest fury, and produce the most marked and terrific results. How frail an object is the stoutest ship, when in the fatal grasp of an ocean tempest! With what speed it is driven before the resistless force of the wind! How easily the billows sport with it, tossing it from wave to wave, as though it were but a feather! The stroke of a single surge makes every timber tremble, and causes the vessel to quiver like an aspen-leaf. I need not describe a storm at sea. Its violence, its awful grandeur and disastrous effects, have oft been told. The piercing, maddened winds; the wild, foaming surges; the lurid lightning, the crashing thunder, the reeling of the ship like a drunken man, the strained and cracking ropes, the bending masts, falling spars, rent and torn sails, the cold mist that fills and darkens the air, the consternation of rapidly-beating hearts, the dread, horrible suspense of the hour,—all these are familiar to the reader. I have read of Christian voyagers who have said that they never knew the full meaning of the apostle's declaration until they had experienced a storm at sea. And not a few, going down into the dark waters, have derived great comfort from the assurance that in the heavenly world there is no more sea. There, serene skies, an unclouded atmosphere and perfect peace, forever reign. The

saint, instead of gazing upon a wild waste of waters, is surrounded with the splendors of celestial cities. Instead of the roar of midnight tempests, the music from angelic choirs, and from the worshipping multitude around the throne, thrills his soul.

Yet these storms have their mission. Rightly viewed, they are the messengers of Jehovah, sent to proclaim his indignation towards our sinful race. They indicate that this panting, groaning earth, lies under the curse of its Creator. They are designed to restrain man in his wickedness, — to remind him of the laws of the supreme Sovereign, which he is so ready to break, and to warn him of more terrible disasters that await the impenitent in another life.

Were it consistent with the principles of God's moral administration, he would not inflict upon one of his creatures the slightest pain or sorrow. Not a storm would arise; not a wreck would be found upon the sea; no calamity would be experienced. But his authority has been resisted; his laws have been broken and trampled under foot; and by storms, earthquakes, pestilence and death, he is teaching the world that he is still a sovereign, — that he has not abdicated his throne, and has no intention of abdicating. He is endeavoring to convince man that it is not for his interest to provoke his wrath; but that it is the part of wisdom to yield to his author-

ity, and seek his favor. He also assures us that it is his ardent desire to receive his children to the happiness and glory of heaven, as soon as it can be done consistently with the claims of justice, and the interests of his moral kingdom. He infinitely prefers to treat us as a kind Father, than to deal with us as an arbitrary Sovereign; and, in the fulness of his love, he makes proclamation that there is a world where there is no more pain or sorrow, — where “all tears shall be wiped away.”

The last point that we would notice is, that in heaven there is no sea to furnish a burial-place for the dead. Since the beginning of the world, what vast multitudes have been deposited in the seaman's church-yard! Though no tolling bell has called together sympathizing friends, though no green sod has opened to receive them, and no quiet grove invited them to rest beneath its shadows, yet they have had their funeral services. The winds have sung their requiem, the waves have furnished a winding-sheet, and coral monuments mark their resting-places. Generation after generation have sunk in the dark waters, and now wait the summons of the last trumpet-peal. Multitudes more will follow them, and go down to sleep beside them.

Mrs. Hemans has beautifully described a wreck and death at sea, in the following touching words:

All night the booming minute-gun
Had pealed along the deep,
And mournfully the rising sun
Looked o'er the tide-worn steep.
A bark, from India's coral strand,
Before the raging blast,
Had veiled her topsails to the sand,
And bowed her noble mast.

The queenly ship ! brave hearts had striven
And true ones died with her ! —
We saw her mighty cable riven,
Like floating gossamer.
We saw her proud flag struck that morn,
A star once o'er the seas, —
Her anchor gone, her deck upturn,
And sadder things than these.

We saw the strong man still and low,
A crushed reed thrown aside ;
Yet, by that rigid lip and brow,
Not without strife he died.
And near him on the sea-weed lay, —
Till then we had not wept, —
But well our gushing hearts might say,
That there a *mother* slept !

For her pale arms a babe had pressed,
With such a wreathing grasp,
Billows had dashed o'er that fond breast,
Yet not undone the clasp.
Her very tresses had been flung
To wrap the fair child's form,
Where still then wet, long streamers hung,
All tangled by the storm.

And, beautiful 'midst that wild scene,
Gleamed up the boy's dead face,

Like slumbers trustingly serene,
In melancholy grace.
Deep in her bosom lay his head,
With half-shut violet eye ; —
He had known little of her dread,
Naught of her agony !

O, human love, whose yearning heart,
Through all things vainly true,
So stamps upon thy mortal part
Its passionate adieu,
Surely thou hast another lot, —
There is some home for thee,
Where thou shalt rest, remembering not
The moaning of the sea !

Yes, there is a home, far above all ocean tempests,
— a home where the death-chill from cold waters
will never be experienced !

At the appointed hour, the sea shall give up its
dead. Coral tombs, and “the giant caverns of the
unfathomed ocean,” will resign their charge ; and
this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this
mortal be clothed with immortality. Then may the
glorified saints, having reached the haven of peace,
cast their anchors within the vail, and feel secure
from all danger.

“ O, for a breeze of heavenly love,
To waft my soul away
To the celestial world above,
Where pleasures ne’er decay !

From rocks of pride on either hand,
From quicksands of despair,

O, guide me safe to Canaan's land,
Through every fatal snare !

Anchor me in that port above,
On that celestial shore,
Where dashing billows never move,
Where tempests never roar !”

VIII.

NO TEMPLE IN HEAVEN.

“And I saw no temple therein ; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” — REVELATION XXI. 22.

A TEMPLE on the earth is the symbol of worship. It indicates that God is not forgotten, and that the apostasy of mankind is not universal. Though the dark clouds of sin have long overshadowed many nations ; though the multitude have said in their hearts “There is no God ;” though crime, treachery, cruelty and oppression, have filled the earth, — yet, in all ages, some have retained the spirit of worship, and adhered to the principles of a true and living faith. They have had their altars, upon which they have offered the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts ; their sanctuaries, where they have often knelt in prayer, and poured forth the song of praise ; their temples, with whose services the sweetest hours and tenderest associations of life are connected.

“ Speak low ! the place is holy to the breath
Of awful harmonies, of whispered prayer ;
Tread lightly ! for the sanctity of death
Broods with a voiceless influence on the air ;

Stern, yet serene ; a reconciling spell,
Each troubled billow of the soul to quell.

Leave me to linger silently a while !

—Not for the light that pours its fervid streams
Of rainbow glory down through arch and aisle,
Kindling old banners into haughty gleams,
Flushing proud shrines, or, by some warrior's tomb,
Dying away in clouds of gorgeous gloom ;

Not for rich music, though in triumph pealing,
Mighty as forest sounds when winds are high ;
Nor yet for torch, and cross, and stole, revealing,
Through incense-mists, their sainted pageantry ;—
Though o'er the spirit each hath charm and power,
Yet not for *these* I ask one lingering hour ;

But by strong sympathies, whose silver chord
Links me to mortal weal, my soul is bound ;
Thoughts of the human hearts that here have poured
Their anguish forth are with me and around.
O, that within my heart I could but keep
Holy to Heaven a spot thus pure, and still, and deep !”

To the ancient Jews, the temple at Jerusalem was an object of the most profound veneration. It stood, not only as the symbol of their faith, but as the monument of their exalted privileges, and the pledge of the special favor and protection of Heaven. Its towers greeted the sun in his rising, and flashed back the tints of a gorgeous western sky. Its light streamed over the mountains and plains of Judea, and guided the tribes of Israel, as they came up, from distant cities and villages, to worship. To the

faithful, it was the gateway to the celestial city. Its music prepared their spirits for the melody of angels, and the songs of the redeemed on high. Its ceremonies shadowed forth the more splendid and august services of heavenly worship. Generation after generation passed by it, on their way to the eternal world, catching the spirit of its devotion and hallowed associations, and receiving the impress of its faith. From the portals of the holy city there went forth constantly a voice, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." And as the tribes took their departure, they echoed back the benediction, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Because of the house of the Lord our God, we will seek thy good."

But, costly and splendid as was this temple, imposing as were its services, and delightful and hallowed as were the associations that clustered around it, yet the Messiah came to make known a purer worship, even, on the earth. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman he said, "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. For God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The Samaritans had erected their temple upon Mount Gerizim, and they contended that from this spot, worship should be rendered to Jehovah. When they, morning and

evening, offered prayer, they turned their faces towards the sacred mountain, deeming this essential to the acceptance of their devotions. Indeed, we may regard the mountains of Canaan as the consecrated temples of Jehovah; for upon their summits God met his devoted servants, and made to them the most brilliant and magnificent displays of his power. Perhaps he selected them because their bold features, and striking grandeur, rendered them fit places for worship, and because they would serve as monuments to perpetuate his visits, and the revelation of his will to man. Their solitude, also, — being far removed from the noise of business, the hum of human voices, and the tread of human footsteps, — rendered them suitable for communion with the Great Spirit that hovered around them.

“ Spirit ! whose life-sustaining presence fills
Air, ocean, central depths by man untried,
Thou for thy worshippers hast sanctified
All place, all time ! The silence of the hills
Breathes veneration ; founts and choral rills
Of thee are murmuring ; to its inmost glade
The living forest with thy whisper thrills,
And there is holiness on every shade.”

Among these natural temples, Mount Sinai stands conspicuous, lifting its majestic form towards the skies, and echoing, to this hour, the solemn voices that Moses heard upon its summit. As a temple

standing alone in the wilderness, and as an historic monument that marks an important epoch in the pilgrimage of God's chosen people, is it an object of thrilling interest. Its awful worship broke the silence that for ages had reigned over the desert. Its deep music startled the multitude whose white tents filled the surrounding plains and valleys. They came forth to gaze, and wonder, and worship. Amid the imposing services of the hour, they perceived the approach of Jehovah, to communicate his laws to mankind. His tread causes the mountain to tremble, and fills with awe and dread the vast throng of worshippers. They perceive the lightning flashes of his eye, and hear, with faint hearts, the thunder of his voice. A cloud envelops him, and rests upon the dome of the great temple. As the peals of thunder cease, and their echoes die away amid the distant hills,—as the silence of death spreads over the people,—a voice proceeds from the cloud, and the great Preacher utters his commands, and reveals his will to mankind !

Mount Moriah is also a temple consecrated to worship ; for thither the patriarch Abraham went to offer, as a sacrifice, his son, in obedience to the divine command. Upon it he erected a rude altar, every stone of which was a witness of his faith and his confidence in Jehovah. The passing breeze carried the tidings of his devotion to the surrounding nations.

And though, by the timely interference of an angel messenger, his son was spared, yet he virtually offered upon that altar the warm affections of a father's heart, and the fond expectations which he had cherished, that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In after ages, the temple of Solomon arose, under the shadow of the sacred mountain; and though that splendid structure has fulfilled its mission and passed away, — though the holy city, with its ancient palaces and towers, has crumbled, — yet this temple remains an enduring monument of the patriarch's faith.

Mount Carmel is also associated with worship, and with the manifestations of Jehovah's power. Upon this proud eminence, the prophet Elijah ministered at an altar dedicated to the true God. Having assembled a vast multitude, who had denied the faith of Israel, and bowed the knee to Baal, he appears to vindicate the claims of Jehovah to their reverence and worship. With his venerable form wrapped in his mantle, with a countenance beaming with devotion, and with a heart full of confidence in God, he enters upon the services of the hour. He lifts up his voice in earnest prayer, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O God, hear me, that this

people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." This supplication the God of Israel hears and answers; and as the fire descends and consumes the sacrifice, the vast audience respond, "The Lord he is the God; the Lord he is the God."

There are other mountain temples scattered through the Holy Land, which are intimately associated with the worship and faith of past ages. But our great High Priest has appeared, and declared "that the hour cometh, and now is," when neither in the mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall men worship. For God is a Spirit, everywhere present, "and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The ancient dispensation, with its rites and ceremonial forms, existed but to prepare the way for a new and more spiritual system. And Christ appears to introduce this system, — to prepare us for the purer and nobler worship of that celestial city, concerning which St. John declares, "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it."

In considering this announcement, we would inquire why the apostle, in the New Jerusalem of which he had so splendid a vision, saw no temple, since, in the holy city, with which he had been so

long familiar, the temple was the most conspicuous object.

One reason which we would assign is, that the worship in heaven is universal, while that upon earth is limited and local. Here, such is the power and extent of human wickedness, that the Deity can make only occasional and local manifestations of his glory. Of the multitudes who have crowded this planet, but few, comparatively, have had any knowledge of the true God, or any desire to worship him. At the time that John wrote, from among all the cities of the earth, but one was formally and specially set apart for the worship of the true God. The great majority were given over to idolatry, with its debasing rites and revolting superstitions. From among all the temples erected upon the earth, for religious services, but one was consecrated as the residence of the Deity. Amid the darkness that covered the earth, and the gross darkness that enveloped the people, there was but one divine Shekinah, — one spot bright with the divine effulgence, and radiant with the divine glory. But in heaven all is light, and beauty, and splendor. The glories of the Deity are confined to no locality, are limited to no class; but spread over every city and kingdom in the vast empire of Jehovah. There is one universal “Holy of holies.”

Yet, we cannot but view the Jewish temple with

emotions of thrilling interest and profound veneration. As the residence of the Deity; as the depository of the great truths uttered by patriarchs and prophets, and of the historical records of the church; as the focus towards which all the divine attributes converged, and from which streamed forth the divine light that saved the world from a total eclipse, under the vast systems of idolatry and atheism; as the type of a more spiritual system, yet to be developed; as shadowing forth, in its ceremonial services, a purer and loftier worship in the future world, — it is entitled to our highest reverence and warmest admiration. We do not wonder that, to a Jewish mind, it was associated with everything sacred, venerable, and honorable. Wherever the Hebrew might wander, he carried with him the image of the temple imprinted on his heart; and in his hour of prayer, he would turn towards it, that his supplications might ascend, with the incense of its devotion, to heaven. If he desired intimate communion with Jehovah, he sought it in his holy temple. If his heart was filled with gratitude for mercies received, he went up to the temple with his offerings to the Lord. To its sacrifices he looked for the expiation of his guilt. Upon its priests he depended for wise counsel, and for the messages of Jehovah. When contemplating his exalted privileges, and the glory of his religion, his enthusiasm

would find utterance in the exclamation, “Beautiful for situation, *the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.*” When impressed with the stability and perpetuity of his faith, he would break forth in the language of the Psalmist, “Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces. For this God is our God forever; he will be our guide even unto death.”

But how shall we describe, or even conceive of the worship above, of which this temple, with its lofty architecture, and gorgeous decorations, and imposing solemnities, is but a faint shadow? How shall we climb to the summits of the mountains that are round about the New Jerusalem, and gaze upon the worship of a city that has no temple,—a city that needs “no candle, neither the light of the sun,” but is filled with the effulgence of the Deity? How can we gain a position where we can hear the peals of its organs, and the melody of its choirs, and the adoring voices of thronging worshippers?

We are told, indeed, that “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” But who will interpret this language for us, and bring to light its hidden meaning? If to the Hebrew the Holy of holies was a mysterious and inaccessible solitude,—if, though within a step of the awful sanctuary, its lustre and mysteries were as much veiled from his

view as the profoundest depths of infinite space, — how can we expect to pass the gate of the heavenly Shekinah, and penetrate the mysteries and gaze upon the splendors of a divine temple, whose columns consist of the attributes of the Godhead, whose light is the glory of God, and whose incense is the essence of Deity? As the Hebrew worshipper must wait until the veil was rent, before the mysteries of the Shekinah could be seen, and the excellences of a new dispensation, and the beauties of a spiritual worship, be appreciated, so must we wait until the veil of mortality is rent, before we can see the beauties and glories of celestial worship. Then may we understand the language, “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Then shall we view a city whose worship is universal; whose every tower, mansion, palace and throne, is bathed in holy light; whose myriads of worshippers have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost; a city, through the streets, and avenues, and halls, and arches of which, will roll the music of a thousand choirs, and the melody of ten thousand anthems of praise. Then shall we hear a *new song*, sung, not, indeed, by a few, but by an “innumerable multitude, that no man can number,” — “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” And, from still greater throngs of

holy and resplendent beings ; from loftier heights and the most profound depths ; from “ every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,” will come echoing back the response, “ Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever.”

Another reason why the apostle saw no temple in heaven, corresponding to that upon earth, was, because in that world there is no Sabbath distinct from other portions of time ; no season specially set apart for religious services ; but one eternal Sabbath and perpetual worship. The vision was that of a city

“ Where congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end.”

By this view, we would not be regarded as advancing the idea, that worship will be the only employment of the saints in glory. We firmly believe that they will have other duties to discharge. Perhaps, even weighty responsibilities may devolve upon them, and interests of vast moment may claim their attention, and require the exercise of their strongest energies. It is not at all improbable, that every virtue which we are required to cultivate here, will be employed on that higher and wider theatre of action. We readily subscribe to

the doctrine advanced by the acute author of "Physical Theory of Another Life," in the following language: "We may conceive of a state of things in which there may be services to be performed, enterprises to be undertaken, and a promotion to be aimed at, such as none but the bold and the strong shall be equal to, and none but the aspiring dare to attempt. These services may involve encounters with powerful and crafty opponents, or they may demand sudden exertions of intelligence, and a ready recurrence to resources, under circumstances that would amaze and baffle all but the calmly courageous. And there may be high advantages to be snatched by the few whose flight can be long sustained, and is the most steady; there may be dominations to be exercised which those shall secure to themselves who can prove, by service done, that they are equal to the weight of the sceptre. It is surely a frivolous notion (if any actually entertain it), that the vast and intricate machinery of the universe, and the profound scheme of God's government, are now soon to reach a resting place, where nothing more shall remain to active spirits, through an eternity, but recollections of labor, anthems of praise, and inert repose. No idea can do more violence to all the principles on which we reason than this does. * * * * * All the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs, — all the versatility, the

sagacity, the calculation of chances, the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility, as well as the higher virtues, which we are learning every day, — may well find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated, when we think of heaven as the stage of life that is next to follow the discipline of this.”

While this may be true, we may with propriety affirm, that the worship of heaven is unceasing. For the spirit of adoration is in every inhabitant, and the utterances of devotion and loyalty are upon every tongue. Every beating heart in the vast multitude is a holy shrine, every worshipper is himself a temple, and every mansion and palace is vocal with the praises of the great King. We are informed that the resplendent beings around the throne “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” The angels, the four and twenty elders, and the hosts of the redeemed, are repeatedly represented as employed in worshipping “him that liveth for ever and ever.”

How delightful to the Christian, to think of entering a heavenly city, over which reign the serenity, light and beauty, of an eternal Sabbath! Though no temple-bells call the inhabitants to worship, yet there is a Sabbath in every soul, songs upon every tongue, and pure and ardent worship in every heart.

“Thine earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love,
But there’s a nobler rest above ;
To that our weary souls aspire,
With ardent hope and strong desire.

No more fatigue, no more distress,
Nor sin, nor death, shall reach the place ;
No groans shall mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.

O, long-expected day, begin !
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin ;
Fain would we leave this weary road,
And sleep in death to rest with God.”

The worship of the earthly temple was also interrupted by the incursions of the enemies of the Jews and of the God of Israel, and in this respect failed to be a perfect type of the worship of heaven. But thirty-three years after it arose in its splendor, it was plundered by Shishak, King of Egypt. Subsequently, it was profaned by the feet of the spoiler, and conquering troops swept through its sacred courts and along its aisles. At length, it was completely laid waste by the King of Babylon, having stood more than four hundred years. After lying in ruins for half a century, the foundations of a second temple were laid, and, after various reverses, the whole structure was utterly demolished. It was, indeed, with the keenest sorrow, and most bitter anguish, that the Hebrews looked upon their proud temple, torn, pillaged, and swept before their impious foes. Nobly did the hosts of Israel stand their

ground upon Mount Zion, to defend the sacred soil and the religion of their fathers. Bravely did they receive upon their own persons the blows that were aimed against the temple, that structure that was dearer to them than life. As their war-cry rung through the streets of Jerusalem, and the banners of Israel floated in the breeze, — as they thought of the magnificence and splendor of their city, of the vast throngs that had come up to worship, — they resolved to defend the objects of their religious enthusiasm, or to perish in the effort. But, being overpowered by the hosts of the enemy, they were forced to surrender, and Jerusalem, with its palaces and temples, fell. “A multitude of captives graced the triumphal entrance of the victors into Babylon, and the city shook to the shouts of welcome. But the pageantry was soon forgotten, and the prisoners became objects only of idle curiosity, as they moved sadly along the streets, or sat in groups under the trees of the public walks. Methinks I see that little band, as, strolling one day through the city, they sat down by its fountains, and listened to the murmur of the streams that swept by. The scene was beautiful, and it reminded them of the hill of Zion, where they had so often strayed, — the home of their hearts, never to be seen again. As they thus sat, and conversed in their native tongue, filled with sad remembrances, their neglected harps hanging

on the willows, the heartless and curious passed by, and stopped to view their strange apparel, and listen to their still stranger language. As they saw their harps hanging beside them, they asked for a native song. The hearts of the captives were sad enough before, but this sudden recalling of the joys of the past was too much for their overburdened feelings, and a burst of tears was the only answer, as they shook their heads in mournful silence.

“That day of bitterness they could never forget ; and whenever memory recalled it, the heart seemed to live over again its hour of woe, and they said, ‘By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down ; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that had wasted us asked for mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land ? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.’ They did not forget her, and the city of David once more rose over the hill of Zion, and the banner of Israel again floated from its heights ; for God had remembered her tears, and forgiven her sins.”*

* Headley.

Thus interrupted and fluctuating was the worship of a temple "made with hands." The Hebrews, being surrounded by bitter enemies, were liable, at any moment, to have their religious services suspended, or their holy sanctuary demolished. But, in that glorious city, of which God Almighty constitutes the temple, the worship can never be interrupted. He who is the temple thereof "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth." Before him, "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering." His power, his majesty, his glorious attributes, will be the pledge of the perpetuity of heavenly worship. No song will there be broken or suspended. No tidings of an approaching enemy will ever alarm a single worshipper. No hostile cry will disturb the devotions of the celestial auditory. Age after age, will the anthems of praise roll from city to city, and rank to rank, filling the universe with their melody, and thrilling, with their rich tones and triumphant accents, myriads of hearts. Immortal worship! What intense meaning, what awful grandeur, in the words! How they swell with solemn import, as we look down the long vista of eternity, and attempt to realize the successive developments that will be made of the splendors and

raptures of a heavenly worship, and the glories of an infinite Deity!

And can we, frail, imperfect beings, aspire to a participation in such services and in such joys? Can we, whose affections are so languid, whose hearts are so cold, and who live at such a distance from the Supreme Father, ever gain admittance to this celestial temple?

“Forgive, O Father! if presumptuous thought
 Too daringly in aspiration rise!
 Let not thy child all vainly have been taught
 By weakness and by wanderings, and by sighs
 Of sad confession!—lonely be my heart,
 And on its penitential altar spread
 The offerings, worthless till thy grace impart
 The fire from heaven, whose touch alone can shed
 Life, radiance, virtue!—let that vital spark
 Pierce my whole being, ’wilderer else and dark!

Thine are all holy things;—O, make *me* thine!
 So shall I, too, be pure,—a living shrine
 Unto that Spirit which goes forth from thee,
 Strong and divinely free,
 Bearing thy gifts of wisdom on its flight,
 And brooding o’er them with a dove-like wing,
 Till thought, word, song, to thee in worship spring,
 Immortally endowed for liberty and light.”*

Another reason for the absence of a temple is found in the fact, that there will be no more need

* Mrs. Hemans, to whose incomparable pen I am indebted for several of the most touching and exquisite poetic quotations in this volume.

of sacrifices, or of the ministrations of an appointed priesthood. The offering of sacrifices for sin, was an important part of the temple service. Though these sacrifices had no efficacy, in themselves, to purify the heart, and secure the favor of Heaven, — though the sacrifice which God required was “a broken and contrite heart,” — yet they were necessary as figures and types of the great sacrifice that was to be made. They were to the Hebrews a continual prophecy of the coming of the Saviour of the world. But Christ having appeared, and suffered and died upon the cross, and his great scheme of redemption having attained to a glorious consummation, in the establishment of celestial worship in his Father’s kingdom, there is no longer any need of sacrifices or altars, or of a select priesthood. All the redeemed are “made kings and priests unto God.” They constitute “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” Instead of worshipping through the medium of ordinances and sacraments, they are permitted to stand in the immediate presence of the Deity, and are surrounded with the manifestations of his glory. Instead of ministering at rude altars, stained with the blood of victims, — instead of seeking pardon through a human and imperfect priesthood, — instead of standing before a veiled and inaccessible Shekinah, — they will worship in a holy sanctuary, a celestial cathedral,

radiant with the beauties of the divine character, and gorgeous with the heavenly light that streams through its richly painted windows; a cathedral whose dome represents the divine majesty, whose arches rest upon the eternal attributes of the Godhead, whose walls are supported by omnipotence, and whose gates are everlasting praise. O, what will be the grandeur and sublimity of those services, conducted by an assembly, all the members of which are “kings and priests unto God”! What will be the rapture and glory of that worship, for which the universe cannot furnish the temple, but of which the God of the universe is the temple! How far surpassing our loftiest conceptions — how much beyond the reach of the telescopic power of the most vivid imagination — must be that divine sanctuary, of which the most gorgeous material edifice, brilliant with the light of a thousand stars, is but a faint and imperfect symbol!

If, however, in this worship, altars, sacrifices and a limited priesthood, are abolished, there is one office which will remain. “Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” The crowning glory of heavenly worship will be the fact, that Christ, as “a great High Priest,” will conduct its services, and lead its devotions. He will appear before “the general assembly

and church of the first born," as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man."

While upon the earth, the Saviour combined many offices and characters in his sacred person. He was a prophet and a fulfiller of prophecy, a priest and a sacrifice, a king and minister, a mediator and a ransom, a redeemer and sanctifier, — the Prince of peace, and the bright and morning star. But he passes into heaven as our "great High Priest." Having worked out the salvation of our race upon Calvary, through a baptism of blood and the agonies of the cross; having led the hosts of the redeemed from the darkness and despair of sin, to the light and blessedness of heavenly hope; having kept in operation a system of influences and instrumentalities for the sanctification of his people, — he now stands in the midst of the vast throng of the church triumphant, to lead their worship and to receive their anthems of praise. And constantly are accessions made to this immense auditory, from the church militant, as one and another Christian hero lays down his armor, and enters upon his reward.

Nor are we obliged, with such an High Priest and Minister of the celestial sanctuary, to limit the services of that worship to acts of adoration and songs of praise. We may reasonably suppose that

he who on earth spake as never man spake, — who here availed himself of every opportunity to impart instruction and wisdom to his followers, — is not silent in that august and glorious assembly. If he took occasion to expound the Scriptures in the Jewish temple, to a company but poorly prepared and little disposed to receive his teachings, how much more will he be ready to unfold the mysteries of revelation and the glories of redemption, to auditors whose enlarged capacities and increased intellectual powers eminently qualify them to receive and appreciate the truth from his lips! If he could here stand upon a mount, and utter a discourse full of the most precious doctrines and sublime precepts, and glowing with sentiments of surpassing beauty and excellence, will he not stand upon the celestial mountains above, and thrill the resplendent and holy throngs around him, with the strains of his divine eloquence, and impart to them a clearer insight into moral truth, and loftier conceptions of the divine character and government, than they could obtain on earth?

When we consider how full the Bible is, to us, of inexplicable difficulties and incomprehensible doctrines; when we consider how “great is the mystery of godliness, — God manifest in the flesh;” and when we meditate upon the dealings of Divine Providence, and remember “how unsearchable are

his judgments, and his ways past finding out," we must believe that these dark mysteries will one day be elucidated, and the obscurities of divine truth be clearly unfolded. We must believe that when we "come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant," we shall rejoice, as the broad fields of moral truth are thrown open before us, and the clouds vanish from before those sublime doctrines that are here veiled from our view !

IX.

THE ANGELIC INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN.

“ Praise ye him, all his angels.” — PSALM CXLVIII. 2.

“ And all the angels stood round about the throne.” — REV. VII. 11.

“ Low warblings, now, and solitary harps,
Were heard among the angels, touched and tuned
As to an evening hymn, preluding soft
To cherub voices. Louder as they swelled,
Deep strings struck in, and hoarser instruments,
Mixed with clear silver sounds, till concord rose
Full as the harmony of winds, to heaven ;
Yet sweet as nature’s spring-tide melodies
To some worn pilgrim, first, with glistening eyes,
Greeting his native valley, whence the sounds
Of rural gladness, herds, and bleating flocks,
Blent with the dulcet distance-mellowed bell,
Come, like the echo of his early joys.
In every pause, from spirits in mid air,
Responsive still were golden viols heard,
And heavenly symphonies stole faintly down.”

HAVING considered, in the preceding articles, the evidences of a future life, and viewed heaven under various scriptural emblems, — having inquired into the likeness of the redeemed to Christ, and exhibited the social enjoyments connected with the recognition of friends in heaven, and the blessedness of spiritual worship in a divine temple, — we come now to speak

of those holy and resplendent beings who crowd the courts, and palaces, and cities, of the great King, and who continually surround the eternal throne.

For a knowledge of their existence, character and employments, we are indebted solely to the sacred Scriptures. The light of nature furnishes no evidences respecting them, although analogy renders it probable, since there are successive gradations of being below man, that there are higher orders of intelligences above him. While we find every department of nature which we have explored instinct with life and crowded with animate existences, we cannot suppose that man constitutes the boundary line on the ascending scale. From the investigations and discoveries of modern science, we learn that even far below the last range of beings visible to the naked eye, there are countless myriads of animalculæ, more than a million of which find ample accommodation in a single drop of water. Indeed, we are told, what is hardly conceivable, that “within the narrow space of a grain of mustard-seed, eight millions of living active creatures can exist, all richly endowed with the organs and faculties of animal life.” In taking one and subjecting it to a careful microscopic examination, it displays a nice and complicated organization, consisting of bones, muscles, sinews, lungs, and all the parts of a perfect and active being. Within this little form are found

the sensibilities, emotions, instincts and desires, that belong to higher orders of animate existence. Those that inhabit, as myriads do, delicate flowers, are environed with beauties and splendors, that to them constitute a glorious paradise. "A distinguished botanist, on subjecting a flower, from which he heard a soft murmuring sound, to the microscope, observed that it was filled with minute insects, who were sporting among the narrow pedestals that supported its leaves. Amid the beauties and fragrance of their little world, he could distinctly observe their movements and enjoyments. The base of the flower, under the influence of the microscope, extended itself to a vast plain; the slender stems of the leaves became trunks of so many stately cedars; the threads in the middle seemed columns of massive structure, supporting at the top several ornaments, and the narrow spaces between them were enlarged into walks and terraces. On the polished bottoms of these, brighter than Parian marble, walked the winged inhabitants, which from dusky insects, as they appeared to the naked eye, rose to beautiful glittering animals, stained with living purple, and with a glossy gold that would have made all the labors of the loom contemptible in the comparison." For several days the botanist viewed the scene with unabated wonder and admiration.

Another remarks: "I have never made observa-

tions of the corolla, simply of the smallest flower, without finding it composed of an admirable substance, half transparent, studded with brilliants, and shining in the most lively colors. The beings that live under a reflex thus enriched must have ideas, very different from ours, of light and the other phenomena of nature. A drop of dew, filtering in the capillary and transparent tubes of a plant, presents to them thousands of cascades; the same drop, fixed as a wave on the extremity of one of its prickles, an ocean without a shore; evaporated in the air, a vast ærial sea. It is credible, then, from analogy, that there are animals feeding on the leaves of plants, like the cattle in our meadows, and on our mountains, which repose under the shade of a dome imperceptible to the naked eye, and which from goblets formed like so many suns quaff nectar of the color of gold and silver."

If, with so lavish a hand, the Creator has thus crowded every leaf, flower and drop of water, with sportive and happy beings, can we suppose that the formation of man has exhausted his power, and that in regions above, there are vast moral wastes which were never occupied by higher orders of intelligences? Is there given to these minute insects a paradise of the richest lustre and variegated splendor, — is every flower a world, with its costly architecture, its beautiful scenery, and its various orders

of busy inhabitants,— while in God's mighty spiritual kingdom there are none to admire his works, or render to him homage, except the comparatively few that have been here redeemed from the dominion of sin? We cannot for a moment entertain such a thought; and yet, as we have already remarked, our only positive and reliable source of evidence upon the subject is the Bible. To the unprejudiced and believing mind, however, the proofs from this source are abundant and satisfactory; for the existence of holy angels is recognized by nearly all the inspired writers. The resplendent beings are represented as surrounding the throne of the Deity, as engaged in acts of worship, as moving amid the splendors of a celestial paradise, and as employed on missions of high importance, and on errands of benevolence. The early Hebrews and the patriarchs were favored with visits and communications from them. They appeared sometimes in visible forms, and at other times in dreams and visions. During the period of the Judges, and about the time of the Babylonian captivity, they are introduced to our notice. Previous to the introduction of Christianity, they were seen gathering around the earth, hovering over the Holy Land, and giving to the devoted servants of God intimations of the Messiah's approach. But the period most distinguished for their appearance and agency was that marked by

the mission of our Saviour, and the labors of the apostles. Then they came not only as interested spectators of the thrilling scenes which were transpiring, but to aid in carrying out the benevolent designs of Heaven toward an apostate world. As a celestial convoy, they accompanied the Saviour in his journeys and visits, watching over him in times of peril, strengthening him when weak, and comforting him in his trials and sorrows.

But, beside Jewish and Christian writers, those of other nations have entertained and advanced opinions, respecting orders of intermediate spirits, corresponding somewhat to those recorded in the Scriptures. The Egyptians and the Greeks, according to the testimony of their eminent philosophers, believed in the existence of spirits, and in their agency in the affairs of mankind. They thought that the immense interval between their own souls and the infinite Deity could not be, reasonably, regarded as a vast waste, but must be filled with orders of spiritual existences, of various degrees of power and perfection. Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, all admitted this doctrine, although they differed in their views respecting some branches of it.

When Christ was upon the earth, the Sadducees were regarded as holding a fundamental error, in denying the existence of angels, and contending that the language used in the Old Testament, in reference

to them, was to be taken figuratively. Several distinguished modern infidels have adopted and advocated the same opinion. Others have erred in the opposite direction, by assigning to the angels too exalted a character, and rendering to them superstitious worship.

As a subject of purely scientific inquiry, the doctrine of angelic existence has claims upon our attention. But that which specially awakens our interest in it is the fact, that we look to this order of intelligences for our companions and instructors in the future life. Besides anticipating the joyful recognition of our pious friends in the spirit world, the true Christian aspires to a companionship with those holy beings, who for ages have been studying the works and perfections of the Deity, and ministering at the altars and worshipping within the courts of the celestial temple. If, therefore, we can learn somewhat of the bright inhabitants of those distant realms, ere our departure thither, — if we can be convinced that we shall be welcomed to the upper kingdom by orders of intelligences that in purity, power and splendor, far surpass our loftiest conceptions, — our zeal to make preparation for that world will be quickened, and our views of its blessedness will be greatly elevated.

Our investigations will respect *the origin, nature, character and employments, of the holy angels.*

With regard to their origin, the sacred writers give us no definite or satisfactory information. Moses, in his historic records, treats of the creation of our globe and of man, without reference to other orders of intelligences, or to what transpired previous to these events. St. Paul, indeed, declares, that God created all things that are in heaven and in earth, "visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Consequently, he created angels; at what period, however, or under what circumstances, we have no data upon which to form an opinion.

Various views have been expressed, by distinguished writers, respecting the time of their creation, many of which are entitled to but little consideration. Some have held, that they were created after man, as God, in the Mosaic account of the creation, proceeded from the lower and inferior of his works, up to the higher. This opinion was advocated by Gennadius,* in the fifth century, and, in modern times, by Schubert, of Helmstädt. It was, however, opposed by Augustine, who, with Theodoret, Peter of Lombardy and others, maintained, that angels were created on the first of the six days, and were interested spectators of the sublime manifestations of divine power that were subsequently made. But the opinion that seems

* See Knapp's Theology, translated by President Woods, pp. 208, 209.

most in accordance with reason and the Scriptures is, that they were created before the visible world, and acted an important part in the affairs of the universe, for ages previous to the creation of man. This view was taken by many of the fathers of the church, and is advocated by distinguished modern theologians.

Nor is it an idea altogether fanciful, that they may have passed through, upon material worlds, a state of probation bearing some analogy to our own ; and that they may have been subjected, in the infancy of their being, to a course of moral discipline that fitted them for their present high station and important duties. The law of discipline under which man lives, and makes progress, and attains to virtue and holiness, may be the universal law of sentient beings. We cannot, indeed, conceive of one's acquiring force of character and strength of religious principle, without the exercise of resistance ; nor can we conceive of the exercise of resistance without temptation, or evil in some form, to resist. If temptation could reach those angels "which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," and if our first parents were so early called to meet it, it may be a force that every intelligent being, in some stage of his existence, must resist. But it is needless to pursue a point

upon which we can only give conjectures, and concerning which both nature and revelation are silent.

With regard to the nature of angels, we can only conceive of them as spiritual beings, possessing mental endowments like our own, although in a much higher state of perfection. Our knowledge of being, in general, and of the possible varieties and capabilities of different orders of intelligences, is exceedingly limited. For even our ideas of God, we are dependent upon the consciousness we have of our own mental attributes, states, and feelings. We conceive of him as a being having our spiritual attributes, in an infinite degree. We can in no other way, with our present organization, form notions of him; and notions thus formed must necessarily be crude and imperfect.

Thus, in our conceptions of angels, we picture to our minds beings in nature like ourselves, though far surpassing us in every intellectual and moral attribute. Their range of knowledge, their power of investigating and discerning truth, their capabilities of managing great enterprises, and discharging the duties of lofty and responsible positions, greatly transcend these advantages and qualities in man, in his highest state of culture.

The question, whether angels have a bodily organization, is one that we shall not attempt to decide. The Bible is silent upon this point, and

the arguments *a priori* which are sometimes adduced in favor of the idea prove nothing. The assertion, that if angels were pure spirits they could not act upon the material world, is entitled to no consideration, from the fact that it can neither be sustained nor refuted. The early fathers who were imbued with the Platonic philosophy, — Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and others, — regarded all spirits as inhabiting subtile bodies, which are imperceptible to any of our senses. This opinion was opposed by many of the schoolmen, who maintained that angels had no bodies, although they had the power of assuming a bodily form, *corpora extraordinaria*, when it was necessary for the accomplishment of a particular mission.

While, however, the Scriptures are silent upon this and some other points, they teach that there are various ranks among these angelic intelligences, possessing different degrees of dignity, power, and excellence; corresponding, in some measure, to the gradation which exists in human society.

This fact is clearly brought to light in the writings of Daniel and Zechariah, and was recognized by Christ and his apostles. The angel who appeared unto Zacharias said unto him (Luke i. 19): “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.” He thus distinguishes himself from angels

of an inferior rank, and was one of the favored number who were admitted to the presence of the great King, and intrusted with embassies of the highest importance. As the prime minister of an eastern monarch was admitted, at all times, to the presence of his sovereign, while those of an inferior rank were excluded, so Gabriel had the high honor of entering into the presence and standing before the Sovereign of the universe.

Michael is also spoken of as one of the chief princes of the heavenly hosts. He is referred to several times, in the Old Testament, as a being of exalted rank, and as destined to perform an important part in the final consummation of all things. In the revelation made to St. John, he appears as the leader of the celestial warriors who fought against the dragon and his hosts. His special official duty seems to be, to guard the citadels of heaven against the assaults of their foes, and to watch the movements of those fallen spirits who are in rebellion against their Sovereign.

The term archangel occurs but twice in the Bible ; once as applied to Michael, and again in 1 Thess. iv. 16 : “ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

Many have supposed that the cherubim* mentioned

* The Hebrew plural of cherub.

in the Old Testament constituted a class of angels ; but they were originally hieroglyphic figures, composed of various creatures, — a mingling of man, an ox, an eagle, or a lion. They are first mentioned by Moses (Gen. iii. 24), as stationed at the east of the garden of Eden, with a flaming sword, to cut off all access to the tree of life. They were inwrought in the tapestry of the ark, and also placed as figures over the ark of the covenant, in the tabernacle, and afterwards in Solomon's temple.

In the vision of Ezekiel, the cherubim appear in a new form, and are described with great distinctness. They are instinct with life, move in a whirlwind, and are emblematic of the divine majesty and glory. They are also represented as appearing in the clouds, and bearing the Deity (Psalm xviii.) through the skies with great magnificence and grandeur. They are referred to by Josephus, and by the oriental writers generally.

Milton, in his sublime language, thus describes them :

Forth rushed, with whirlwind sound,
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel, undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit ; but conveyed
By four cherubic shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous, as with stars their bodies all ;
And wings were set with eyes ; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between.

The seraphim were evidently an order of angelic

beings of a very high rank. The original Hebrew word * signifies *to burn*, and a Jewish commentator says that the name was given on account of their shining, fiery appearance.

They are alluded to but once in the Scriptures, and then by the prophet Isaiah, in his sublime description of the manifestation of Jehovah to him, Isaiah vi. 2—6. In the vision, God is represented as seated upon a throne, high and lifted up, surrounded with the emblems of dignity and majesty, and attended by ministers called seraphim. He is clothed with a robe of royalty, the train of which fills the temple. These ministering spirits, in an attitude of the most profound veneration, are solemnly engaged in the worship of the great King. So awful and sublime are the services, that the pillars of the edifice tremble, and the whole interior is filled with a cloud, the symbol of the divine presence. The spirits reverently veil their faces in the presence of the Infinite, and, with the deepest awe, cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.”

We would next inquire into the character and attributes of the heavenly inhabitants. The Scrip-

* Some commentators and critics, and among them Gesenius, suppose that the name is derived from a word signifying *to be noble*, or *excellent*, and hence applied to the nobles and princes of heaven. Without burdening our pages with a discussion of the question, or a quotation of the authorities on both sides, it is sufficient to remark, that the evidence preponderates in favor of the opinion that we have expressed.

tures teach us that they are distinguished for their intellectual faculties and attainments, their power, holiness, benevolence, and great personal glory.

While we conceive of them as richly endowed with intelligence and wisdom, we would be cautious not to ascribe to them divine attributes. However elevated and superior a created intelligence may be, the distance between him and the Creator is still infinite. And though he continues to advance from one height to another, as the ages of eternity roll on, yet there remains a vast gulf which he can never pass. There are regions above, stretching away into measureless distances, which he can never reach.

The boundaries, however, of angelic intelligence and knowledge, we cannot accurately define. It is evident that there are subjects which are beyond their comprehension. Connected with the scheme of redemption, there are deep mysteries "which the angels desire to look into." The hour of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Saviour declares, "knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven." And in the book of Job, we are told that God charged his angels with folly. Yet their intellectual power, their vast stores of knowledge, the wonderful discoveries that they have made, are such as surpass all human comprehension. For ages, they have been studying the works of God; searching the profound depths of the divine wisdom and goodness; penetrating into

the qualities and essence of matter and mind; exploring the physical, intellectual, and moral universe; having a range of inquiry and research extending from the throne of God down to the minutest atom; and, consequently, their powers and acquisition vastly transcend our loftiest conceptions. In anticipating companionship with such beings, we may indulge the expectation of deriving the highest intellectual benefits from their society. We may reasonably hope that communing with their spirits, or listening to their discourses, will greatly stimulate our own minds, and will enrich our understandings with the most precious treasures of knowledge. A thousand difficulties will be solved. Perplexing mysteries will be cleared up. Scientific and moral truth will be clothed with fresh charms, under their instructions; and the soul will kindle into a glow of intense enthusiasm, at the thought of the splendid fields of knowledge that are yet to be traversed, and of the facilities and aids to be enjoyed in exploring them.

The power of angels is represented as immensely great. This is indicated in the appellations given to them in the Scriptures,—They are called *Δυνάμεις*, Powers; *Θρόνοι*, Thrones; *Ἐξουσίαι*, Authorities; *Κυριότητες*, Dominions; *Ἀρχαί*, Principalities, etc.

David exclaims, “Bless the Lord, ye his angels, *who excel in strength.*” Several instances are given

in the Scriptures of the exercise of their power. In one night, an angel destroyed, of the army of Sennacherib, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men. As though by a single stroke, this vast multitude were stretched dead throughout the camp. The sentinels, as, early in the morning, they passed from tent to tent, were appalled at the sight of their prostrate fallen warriors, who but yesterday were in the full glow of health and courage, and stood ready for the fiercest conflict.

The slaughter of the first-born, in Egypt, was accomplished by one angel, within so short a period that the wild lamentations of bereaved parents burst at once from their habitations. Every house was, in an instant, a scene of indescribable consternation, and every street was lined with the habitations of death.

To effect the destruction of Jerusalem, on account of the sin of David, in numbering the people, but one angel was sent forth. “And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem.” How terrible and sublime was the scene! Around the offending monarch lay the holy city, metropolis of the religious world, with its inhabitants slumbering in supposed security. The pale moon was throwing its silver beams upon the turrets and bat-

lements, and upon the domes of the highest palaces. The stars were calmly looking down upon the plains, mountains and gardens, of Judea. Directly over the city was this bright and powerful being, grasping a glittering sword. A single movement of the fatal weapon, and death might enter every habitation. A single stroke, and that magnificent city might become a vast tomb, with no beating heart, no sign of life, within its walls. Do we wonder that "David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces"? Do we wonder that they pleaded earnestly with God, that that dreadful sword might be returned into its sheath?

In the glorious visions that passed before St. John, as described in the Revelation, angels are represented as clothed with vast power, as controlling the physical elements, holding the four winds of heaven, and executing the judgments of God upon his guilty subjects. In the descriptions, given in this book, of the angels, there is a mingling of beauty and sublimity, of majesty and terror, of thrilling eloquence and awful grandeur, that cannot be surpassed. While the heavens were covered with scenes descriptive of the glory of Christ, of the prosperity of his church, and of the triumphs of his kingdom, — while important events in the history of the world's renovation and redemption crowded upon each other, in their struggle to manifest themselves,

— the apostle sees seven mighty angels standing before God, with seven trumpets in their hands. As one startling peal follows another, the most terrible woes descend and burst upon the world. The sky is darkened by fearful storms, and the deep, heavy thunder, and lurid lightning, tell that the day of God's wrath has come. The guilty stand aghast, and gaze with horror upon the scene. Chariots of fire are seen coursing through the heavens, and bearing the messengers of the divine vengeance. Burning mountains are hurled to and fro, and consume everything within their reach. Stars fall, the sun becomes darkened, and the moon refuses to shed its light. "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" In the midst of these wild commotions and terrible calamities, an announcement comes to the apostle, in a voice of thunder, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." He hears the crash of her falling palaces and towers, and sees the smoke ascending from her ruins. The shrieks of her guilty inhabitants rend the air. Her haughty kings are laid low, and their sceptres, crowns and thrones, are buried beneath the ruins of

the city. They experience the fulfilment of the terrible prophecy, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

The apostle also has a view of a great battle between the holy angels and the enemies of Jehovah; Michael and his hosts are arrayed against the dragon and his angels; the two parties virtually representing the principles of redemption and holiness on the one hand, and the elements of wickedness and rebellion on the other. A fierce struggle takes place, in which each contends for the victory. The holy angels are nerved for the conflict by the consciousness that they are defending the citadels of heaven, protecting the throne of Jehovah, and guarding the interests and happiness of millions of obedient subjects, against the destructive purposes of intruders and rebels. Thus animated by the purest motives and loftiest purposes, and sustained by an Almighty arm, they overcome and subdue their foes.

These judgments, thus brought upon the enemies of God, all the holy angels are represented as approving. "After these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord

our God, for true and righteous are his judgments.” And again, “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

Eminent holiness is also a characteristic of the celestial inhabitants. This is abundantly evident, from the nature of their abode, their proximity to the Holy of holies, the Biblical representations of their character, and the services and worship in which they are constantly engaged. On the morning of the creation, they are introduced as employed in acts of worship. As the beauties of the new-made earth appear, and planets and suns burst forth from chaos and darkness, at the summons of Omnipotence, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

As the Lord of Glory leaves his throne, and comes upon his sacred mission, a multitude of heavenly hosts attend him; and as the royal retinue draw near to earth, they are heard by pious shepherds “praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Their holy character may be inferred, too, from the fact that “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” The news that one wanderer is returning to his Father’s house, that one spirit is breaking away from the dominion

of sin, sends a thrill of joy through their shining ranks; it flies from host to host, rolling up a wave of exultation, and causing heaven to swell with new anthems of praise, and fresh songs of triumph.

The holiness of angels is indicated in their cheerful and uniform obedience. They are often spoken of as being sent by God upon various missions to the earth. "My God *hath sent* his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me," Dan. vi. 22. "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel *was sent from God* unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth," Luke i. 26. "Now I know of a surety that the Lord *hath sent* his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod," Acts xii. 11.

Thus we find that the angels are ever ready to obey their Sovereign, and execute his will. Their plans and purposes are in unison with the Divine Mind. They have no selfish ends in view, no unholy desires to gratify. They have no higher ambition than to execute, with fidelity and success, the commands of their King. They delight in serving. They glory in their loyalty. They covet no other state, for they have reached the highest attainable by created intelligences. They can go no higher, without being infinite. They can occupy no loftier positions, without being gods.

They know, too, that holiness and happiness are inseparably connected. One sinful act, they are

aware, would banish them from royal courts, strip them of all honors, plunge them from light into darkness, from celestial heights and pleasures into the regions of despair. Hence, they are held by the strongest motives to their allegiance to God. They feel that their interests are identified with the interests of God's holy kingdom, and that their happiness depends upon the perpetuity of the divine government, and the supremacy of the divine will.

How delightful to contemplate these pure and bright beings, whose thoughts, purposes and deeds, are resplendent with holiness, whose characters are free from the least imperfection, and over whose spirits no shadow of sin or evil ever passes! Their very names give to us exalted conceptions of their purity, dignity, and elevated position. They are called *Sons of God*. They bear the image of the Father, are the members of his family, the recipients of his warm paternal affections, and they return to him the love and services of obedient children. They are *Living Ones*; beings instinct with life, full of animation, in whom are condensed all the attributes of intelligence, and the perfections of moral worth. Their powers have developed and expanded under the genial influences of heaven, and amid beauties and splendors that have left their images impressed upon them. They are *Burning Ones*; beings that shine with celestial lustre, with the

brightness of "morning stars." They reflect the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and are radiant with the beauteous tints of the rainbow. "I saw," says John, "another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was, as it were, the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." And again, "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power: and the earth was lightened with his glory." His very presence illuminated the mountains, and valleys, and plains, and spread over the whole scene a heavenly lustre.

Another characteristic of the celestial inhabitants is their pure benevolence. Although they are often represented as executing the judgments of Jehovah, as in the sublime visions that passed before John, yet they delight in missions of love. With what alacrity did an angel hasten to Hagar in the wilderness, to relieve her distress, and afford her comfort in her loneliness and sorrow! What earnestness did the angels manifest to save Lot and his family from the ruin in which Sodom and its guilty inhabitants were to be involved! In the quiet of evening they approached the house, to warn them of their danger, and afford them time to prepare for their flight. Patiently they wait for the slow hours of night to bring the dawn of the morning. As soon as the sun rises, and its rays gild the towers and turrets of the

city, the angels, with their charge, are seen hurrying towards the gates. Having reached the plain, they observe, in Lot and his family, indications of a reluctance to proceed. With the deepest anxiety apparent in their countenances and manner, they cried out, "Escape for thy life! look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!"

A very touching example of angelic tenderness and love is furnished in the case of the prophet Elijah. This servant of the Lord, after a most triumphant vindication of the sincerity of his faith, and the truth of his religion, upon Mount Carmel, had escaped from his persecutors, and reached the wilderness, weary and exhausted. Reclining under a juniper-tree, and pleading, almost in despair, for death, he fell asleep. An angel was sent to him, and, bending over the unconscious slumberer, is impressed with the prophet's destitute and sad condition. He who, but a short time previous, had called fire from heaven, and confounded vast multitudes of people, — who had defied and slain four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal, — was now a solitary fugitive in a desert, homeless, friendless, and ready to die. The angel prepares his food, and, touching him, "said, Arise and eat." Having obeyed, he again laid down. The angel addressed him the

second time, and besides giving him food, he cheered and strengthened him.

But the most beautiful and affecting instances of the love of angels are furnished in their ministrations to our Lord, while he was upon the earth. In his infancy they watched over him, with the utmost solicitude. When a cruel tyrant, thirsting for his blood, formed a conspiracy to destroy him, an angel said to Joseph, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word." It was not enough that he warned him to escape, but such is his tender care, that he tells him not to stir from his retreat, until he brings him word. He wishes to guard every avenue through which the treachery or hatred of Herod could reach the infant Saviour.

As the Messiah grew up, he was constantly watched over and guarded by the bright squadrons that were sent from his Father's kingdom. In every stage of his progress he was emphatically "seen of angels." They witnessed his humility, strict obedience, conflicts, and bitter trials. When severely tempted by Satan, and left upon the pinnacle of the temple, "angels came and ministered to him."

In that terrible scene in the garden, when he struggled with "the rulers of the darkness of this world," when his mysterious and awful agony forced the blood through the pores of his skin, and he was

ready to faint from exhaustion, “there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” With the most intense sympathy, with a spirit alive to every want, pain and groan, of the Saviour, the celestial messenger delights to soothe his anguish and support his burdens.

When betrayed by Judas, and about to be seized by the cruel mob, Christ said, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” So ready was the Father to send them, that a word only was necessary to secure the presence of a force, that would instantly disarm every foe. We may almost see the legions pressing forward for the conflict, their swords flashing amid the darkness of that cruel night, their countenances burning with zeal to rescue the Lord of glory. But they are held back by the arm of Omnipotence. No legion is sent out, no celestial warriors engaged in the conflict.

The victory of the Messiah over death and hell, the angels come to celebrate. Their arrival is announced by the shock of an earthquake. “And behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.” How much is

compressed within this short description ! What benevolence, purity and glory, beam forth from this mysterious messenger ! Behold him, sitting in dignity and conscious strength, upon that stone. The Lord has risen, and departed. The sentinels lie apparently dead at his feet. His robes are of the purest whiteness. His countenance shines with an effulgence that can only be compared to the lightning. The pious women, who came to the tomb seeking their Lord, he endeavors to soothe. He bids them hasten and assure his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

But our limits will not allow us to refer to all the instances of angelic sympathy and love, recorded in the Scriptures. We have said enough to show the nature and character of the inhabitants of that bright world, to which the saints are soon to be introduced. We have seen that holy angels occupy the highest rank in the scale of created intelligences ; that they are endowed with brilliant powers, vast capacities, an intense desire for knowledge and love of truth ; that they possess every virtue that contributes to form an elevated and holy character ; that there is a grandeur connected with them, that is calculated to excite our highest admiration, and warmest affection. To dwell with such bright, pure spirits forever, — to enjoy their society, listen to their discourses, walk with them amid the bowers, streams and fountains, of

the celestial paradise; worship with them in the temples of the New Jerusalem; soar with them amid the worlds and systems that float around the throne of their great King, to bow with them in deep reverence before the Eternal, — how blessed and glorious such anticipations! How rapidly will our social nature be developed and strengthened, under circumstances so favorable! With what delight shall we look upon their white robes, their celestial forms, their dazzling countenances, their eyes beaming with true affection, their lips uttering words of wisdom and love!

With what rapture shall we listen to their songs and praises! As we approach the eternal city, we may hear, bursting from every inhabitant, the loud chorus, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!” As we draw nearer the cry from the heralding angels reaches us: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!” The choirs from within are heard anxiously inquiring, “Who is the King of glory?” The shout of the approaching hosts answers, “The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle.”

Again the summons peals forth from the glowing, resplendent legions, — “Lift up your heads, O ye gates!” The same inquiry comes from within the city, “Who is this King of glory?” The innumer-

able hosts, now burning with devotion, and wrought up to the highest degree of enthusiasm, thunder out, in peals that almost shake the walls and gates, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!" The Lord of cherubim and seraphim, angels and arch-angels, of the redeemed multitudes gathered out of every nation, tribe and kingdom, "he is the King of glory!"

And when we are admitted within the city, and the full splendor of angelic worship bursts upon us, we can only give vent to our overpowering emotions in the sublime language of St. John: "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

X.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

“They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”—MATTHEW XXIV. 30.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”—PHILIPPIANS II. 9.

HEAVEN without Christ would be like the firmament without a sun. We should have, indeed, the stars, angelic spirits, whose light and beauty would cheer us; but there would be no bright luminary to pour its effulgence upon the cities, and gardens, and kingdoms, of the celestial world. Many advantages, as we have seen, would be enjoyed by the saints, in the society of the holy angels; but “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the “one altogether lovely,” would be absent.

As Christ is the central power, the vital animating principle, the “all in all,” of the church militant, so he will be the object of the highest admiration, and most intense delight, of the church triumphant. The redeemed will gaze upon him with emotions that will thrill every sensibility, and stir the deepest and holiest feelings of the soul. They will recognize in him “the author and fin-

isher of their faith ;” their “great advocate” at God’s right hand ; the “bright and morning star ;” the “only-begotten of the Father ;” the “Emmanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, who is exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.” That which will strike the saints with amazement and delight, will be the contrast between the Saviour’s circumstances in heaven, and those that surrounded him upon the earth. Instead of a rude and comfortless structure for the resting-place of his infant form, instead of wandering homeless and friendless upon a bleak and desolate world, he will be surrounded with the magnificence of royal palaces, and the splendor of heavenly cities. Instead of being an object of scorn and hatred, driven from village to village, a “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” he will be attended with myriads of celestial beings, who will regard him with the most intense affection, and who will bow before him, in obedience to the royal edict, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Instead of meeting a few humble disciples in an obscure room, he will stand in the midst of “a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.” Instead of performing here and there a miracle, before a company of the idle, the curious and the

sceptical, he will present to the universe the miracle of a world redeemed from the power of sin, — a world raised from darkness and wretchedness into the regions of light, purity, and blessedness. The same being who was rudely seized, in the night, by an armed mob; hurried away to a mock trial; scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns that pierced his fevered brow; driven towards Calvary amid the jests and wild clamor of an infuriated rabble, — who, exhausted from fatigue and torture, was nailed to the accursed tree, and expired, amid rending rocks, opening graves, a darkened sky, and the shouts of merciless foes, — shall be seen exalted far above all principalities and powers, and receiving the homage and enthusiastic praises of the hosts of heaven.

His glory will appear in the new and wonderful developments that will be made of his character. While upon the earth, his virtues shone with all the beauty and lustre that could be conveyed through the medium of a human body. Though incarnate, he was yet, here, “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” The glory of the Father shone through him, and he revealed its excellences, just as light, shining through a prism, develops its beautiful colors. In his whole life he reflected the virtues and holy principles of heaven. Not a cloud of

error ever cast its shadow over his pure spirit; not a sinful word ever escaped his lips; not a selfish motive influenced his conduct. He was the Shekinah of the temple of humanity. From his sacred person streamed forth a divine light, that relieved the darkness of the world. He was the "Holy of holies" of a spiritual temple, in which all the nations of the earth will, one day, assemble for worship.

He was also a force for immeasurable good among the guilty children of men. His mission constituted the epoch, in the world's history, towards which all previous events, prophetic utterances and revelations, converged, and from which flowed the influences and moral agencies that are revolutionizing and blessing the nations. He was, in fact, himself, history; the only history that embodies the records of what is imperishable in the career of man; the only history that infallibly indicates the destiny of the race, and that will, in future ages, be studied with absorbing interest. For in him centred the hopes, happiness and glory, of all future generations. As the second Adam, he came as the progenitor of a new, more elevated, and spiritual race. As a king, the sceptres of all other kings must grow weak before his increasing power. As the founder of an empire, all other empires must break up, that from their ruins may rise, in its beauty and majesty, the kingdom of Christ. As the author

of a new system of faith, he must advance until the human mind is purged from all error; until infidelity lays down its arms, in meek submission; until every idol falls, every heathen temple is deserted, and every priesthood is merged in the office of the one great High Priest. We speak of Christ as a revelation from the Father. We should rather speak of him as having planted the seeds of a divine revelation, that a progressive Christian civilization is opening to the world. For Christendom to-day, in its refinement, intellectual culture, social elevation and happiness, presents an array of evidences in favor of "the truth as it is in Jesus," that no unprejudiced mind can resist. And in the progress of civilization over the world, we have a new or third book of Revelation opening for our inspection and study. Every great improvement in human society, every important invention in the arts, or valuable discovery in science, is a miracle that attests the truth and divine origin of Christianity. Our Christian nation, with its system of education, its social order, peaceful Sabbaths, industrial enterprises, its prosperity, power and happiness, is a fulfilled prophecy. It is a witness before the world that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is." And as new chapters in this book of Revelation open to mankind in coming time, they will see, with in-

creased distinctness, the excellences and glories of that system, which to the narrow-minded Jew was a stumbling-block, and to the proud Greek, foolishness. We do not, indeed, wonder, that these bigoted cotemporaries of our Saviour failed to discern the excellences and forces of a system that requires ages for its development, and a world for the theatre of its operations.

But, notwithstanding Christ manifested and accomplished so much, yet human nature, in its best state, is comparatively an imperfect medium, through which to exhibit the power and lustre of divine virtues. When Christ visited us, we are informed that he laid aside his glory and the robes of royalty, and “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.” The act of appearing in a lonely condition, however, we do not regard as of great moment, while contemplating the mission of the Redeemer; for all the honors of princes, and the splendor of earthly palaces, and the brilliant insignia of worldly distinctions, were as nothing, compared with the glory that he had with the Father. His becoming incarnate, whether he appears as a servant or a king, required him to lay aside the peculiar splendor of his person; and had he come forth from a princely court rather than a manger, he would still have humbled himself. The widest distinctions in human society are so narrow

and insignificant as not to enter into the account, when we speak of the incarnation of so exalted and illustrious a Being. Neither do these distinctions furnish any basis to aid us in our endeavors to measure the height of his heavenly glory. As the most distant points in the earth's wide orbit around the sun seem to be in the closest proximity, when the astronomer attempts to make the intervening line the basis of mathematical inquiry into the distance of a fixed star, so the wide distinctions among men dwindle into insignificance, when we attempt to measure and comprehend the exaltation of Christ in his celestial state. His object in coming to our world was to enter the heart of humanity; at what point was a matter of but little consequence. He doubtless had good reasons for selecting the lowest rank. He may have seen more worth, more stern integrity and warm affection, there, than in higher ranks. He may have perceived in this class elements of character upon which he could rely in the hour of trial, — a strength of principle having force adequate to smite the giant systems of iniquity and hypocrisy against which he must contend. He certainly found more sympathy, more real friendship and devotion, there, than elsewhere.

Besides, the object of Christ's mission was not to benefit a few, in select and exclusive circles, but to bless the mass of mankind. He came to address

man as man,—to lay down rules for his government in all the varied circumstances and conditions of life. He came to throw into society elements and principles that would elevate the whole people, that would revolutionize the sentiments and hopes of the race, that would work society clear of every form of vice, every system of error and oppression, and establish the reign of right, humanity, and holiness. Nor was he content with simply giving to the world principles for the government of their conduct. He gave to them a life. He exhibited to them principle and truth, in action; living, moving and breathing, in an example. He not only pointed out the way to heaven, but he showed men how to walk therein. He not only warned them against temptation, but taught them *how* to grapple with it, and how, in the fiercest conflict, to obtain the mastery. He not only said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,” but he gave the most illustrious example of these precepts that the world ever beheld. He not only told us to make preparation for death, but he showed us how to die, and by his resurrection and ascension he “brought life and immortality to light.” As we may learn more of the nature and glory of light from the sun, than from the clearest and most accurate definitions of the word which lexicographers can furnish, so we may learn more

of virtue, of theology and of moral truth, from the life of Christ, than from the most elaborate and voluminous systems of divinity. And if the excellences of his character shone so brightly in this dark world,—if they were fraught with so many blessings, amid circumstances so adverse to their influence,—how glorious must be the developments of his divine attributes in that celestial abode, where he has a name that is above every name, where he is exalted far above all principalities and powers! If here his purity, holiness and benevolence, were so conspicuous, and excited such admiration and gratitude in the hearts of his disciples, with what rapture will the redeemed in heaven gaze upon the full opening of his divine nature, and the splendors of his exalted and matchless character! Language, indeed, fails us, in our attempts to describe the emotions of the soul, when it shall view for the first time the Saviour, radiant with the glory of his divine person.

“ O, could I speak the matchless worth,
O, could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Saviour shine!
I’d soar and touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel, while he sings,
In notes almost divine.

I’d sing the precious blood he spilt,
My ransom from the dreadful guilt
Of sin, and wrath divine;

I'd sing his glorious righteousness,
In which all-perfect, heavenly dress,
My soul shall ever shine.

I'd sing the characters he bears,
And all the forms of love he wears,
Exalted on his throne ;
In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,
I would to everlasting days
Make all his glories known.

Well, the delightful day will come,
When my dear Lord will bring me home,
And I shall see his face ;
Then, with my Saviour, brother, friend,
A blest eternity I'll spend,
Triumphant in his grace."

Although our clearest conceptions of Christ in glory must be necessarily partial and obscure, and our delineations must fall vastly below the reality, yet we would, in dependence upon divine aid, examine separately some of the attributes which in combination give such perfection and lustre to the Saviour's character.

Conspicuous above all other virtues will appear his love. This will be the most brilliant star in the whole constellation, and will excite among the redeemed around his throne the most profound gratitude and intense delight. It will be seen that all the other attributes are tributary to this ; that the omnipotence of Christ has been employed in opening channels through which his love might flow forth

to the sentient creation ; that his wisdom has been exercised in devising means for reaching every heart that was willing to be the recipient of its blessings, and that the eternity of his being gives perpetuity to the manifestations of his benevolence. It will be seen, while contemplating the dignity and glory of Christ, how great was the love that prompted to such sacrifices as were necessary to effect the redemption of the world. This subject will fill the saint with amazement, with infinite wonder. It will swell and expand before his imagination, the more he meditates upon it. It will spread out before him as an ocean, boundless, fathomless ; an ocean which none but an immortal being, with the ages of eternity before him, can traverse. He will see that, as the system which Christ established upon the earth requires centuries for its full development, and the growth of its rich benefits, so this attribute of divine love, though it opens with such brilliancy before the redeemed, will yet require the ages of eternity for the manifestation of its various elements, and the full display of its surpassing glories. Long will be the period before he will “be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height : and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

Yet even now he can scarcely believe that such a

being took upon him our nature, and was made in the form of a servant. “What!” he exclaims, “was he whom I now behold encircled with such honors — receiving the worship of myriads of intelligences — once a babe in Bethlehem, the object of a tyrant’s hatred and the public’s scorn? Was he once hunted, like a wild beast, from village to village, by blood-thirsty enemies? Was he ‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’? Was it this glorious personage who hung upon the cross, whose hands and feet were lacerated by the nails, whose side was pierced, and who expired amid tortures and insults that the heart sickens to contemplate?

“O! as I look from these heights down upon that dark world, — that abode of misery, theatre of crimes, wars, oppression, pestilence and death, — I can scarcely believe that it was ever visited by so pure and resplendent a being. The mystery of godliness — ‘God manifest in the flesh’ — is increased, rather than diminished.

“I had hoped to have unravelled this mystery, but it grows upon me. The more I attempt to grasp it, the more it spreads out and extends beyond my comprehension. At every attempt to fathom it, it becomes deeper and deeper. ‘God manifest in the flesh!’ O, let the words be inscribed upon every arch and column in the holy city! Let them be engraved upon every redeemed soul! Let them constitute

the chorus of every anthem, and inspire every heart with the spirit of enthusiastic devotion! Let them thrill the universe with gratitude and praise!

“And to remember that these sacrifices were made and sufferings endured for me, that I might be redeemed from the curse of the law,—that I, a guilty wanderer, might be brought back to my Father’s house!

“ ‘O, for this love let rocks and hills

Their lasting silence break ;

And all harmonious human tongues

The Saviour’s praises speak !

Angels, assist our mighty joys,

Strike all your harps of gold !

But when you raise your highest notes,

His love can ne’er be told.””

As the ages of eternity roll on, new features of this attribute, as we have already intimated, will be developed. Fresh coruscations will burst forth, and shed their radiance upon all surrounding objects.

Its blessings, too, will be experienced in a far higher degree there than they could be on earth. With glorified bodies, with enlarged capacities, with purified hearts, we shall be fit receptacles for the holy influences and rich benefits imparted by this benevolence. There will be no obstacles, as there were upon earth, to impede the flow of the mighty tide. Among the vast multitude, there will be no

blind waiting to receive their sight, no sufferer needing immediate relief, no sick to be healed, no dead to raise, no sceptic to convince, no foe to disarm; but all will be prepared to receive the full and repeated impressions of this love. Having reached a world where there is no more pain, sickness or death, where there is no night of sorrow, where there is “a rest for the people of God,” they will experience more fully the blessedness, and drink more deeply from the fountain, of this love. And Christ will be able to accomplish his ardent wish, expressed on earth in the following language: “That the love wherewith thou (the Father) hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” His desire was, that the infinite love that the Father entertained towards him should be in all his followers, and that he might himself dwell in them. It was not enough that they were near him, and looked upon him, and felt the power of his example, and experienced the benefits of his affection; but he wished to be in them, to have his image stamped upon them, to have them united to himself as the branches are united to the vine. He desired to establish a divine unity that would embrace all his followers, — a unity, not only of spirit, sentiment and life, but of being. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they all may be one; even as thou art in me,

and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” This wish the Saviour dwelt upon, with peculiar emphasis, in his farewell address to his disciples, and in the fervent prayer which he afterwards offered up in their behalf. He comforted them with the assurance that this union should be consummated in heaven, and that they should there behold his glory, and experience the full blessedness of his love. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me: that they may behold my glory.”

The wisdom of Christ will constitute an element of his glory. Of this wisdom we obtain some glimpses here, from the plan of redemption, the manner of its execution, and its application to the condition and necessities of man. But our knowledge of God — of his divine government, of the nature and consequences of sin, and of the realities of the future life — is too limited to allow us to obtain adequate conceptions of the wisdom of Christ. Even inspired men do not attempt to unfold it. In their comprehensive and sententious language, they speak of Christ as one “in whom *are hid all the treasures of wisdom.*” He is called, too, “the wisdom of God;” not simply wise, or a striking manifestation of wisdom, but the very essence and substance of wisdom. We may well suppose that, to carry into successful operation a plan such as he formed, of

taking his stand between the divine government with its rigid laws and fearful penalties, on the one hand, and the rebellion and awful degeneracy of mankind, on the other, and attempting to reconcile the two, and bring into harmony the opposing parties, required a degree of wisdom of which no finite mind can conceive. To be stationed between such forces, for the purpose of hushing the storm of battle, breaking every hostile weapon, bringing order out of confusion, loyalty out of rebellion, was an undertaking that required, not only infinite love, but boundless wisdom, — wisdom adequate to such a distribution and adjustment of influences as would accomplish the design. The wisdom required in creating a world, or in constructing the human frame, or the more delicate piece of workmanship, the mind, is of an inferior character to that demanded by this enterprise. For this is a moral enterprise, one with which physical force has nothing to do. It pertains to a moral government, and moral subjects. The government above must be sustained, at all hazards. That cannot be lowered. Its requisitions admit of no compromise. In the maintenance of its stability and authority, is involved everything that is dear to God, or valuable to the universe. The honor of the Deity, the highest happiness of his holy subjects, the accomplishment of his eternal designs, are all connected with it. Better that

heaven and earth pass away — better that all that is material, and visible, and finite, be swept from existence — than that one jot or tittle of that law remain unfulfilled.

On the other hand, the free agency of man must be preserved. However desperate his wickedness, or fierce his passions, or corrupt his heart, he must be reached, if reached at all, by moral means. He cannot be dragged by force out of the deep pit into which he has plunged himself. His sensibilities must be affected, his heart must be moved, his sense of gratitude must be touched.

Besides, the balance of influences between the myriads of worlds that are scattered through immensity must be preserved. It becomes a matter of nice calculation how much moral influence can be employed by the Supreme Executive, consistently with other claims, to overcome the wickedness and apostasy of man. This scheme of redemption is no secret matter. It is no private or local enterprise. It is open to the gaze and scrutiny of all intelligences. Angels desire to fathom its mysteries, desire to solve the problem how God can be just, and yet justify them that believe. All the subjects of God's government are interested in the bearings of this scheme upon the administration, upon the claims of strict justice, and upon their own relations to the Deity. It must, therefore, be

conducted with infinite wisdom, and with a full knowledge of all the influences that may flow from it, — all the springs of action, among myriads of intelligences, that it may touch.

In the execution of the plan, the principles of worldly wisdom and the elements of worldly power are entirely disregarded. At the first opening of the enterprise, it appears to human view a failure. The great agencies of influence, kings, governments, priests, the learned and wealthy classes, are against it. Its hero succeeds in gathering a few disciples from among the obscure and illiterate, but upon others his mission makes, comparatively, a slight impression. After various reverses, the whole scheme ends in, apparently, a total defeat. The Messiah, who but recently was so full of promises to his followers, hangs dead upon a cross. His few friends have scattered, and the affairs of the world go on as usual. The inhabitants of Jerusalem pursue their avocations, as though nothing of marked importance had occurred.

But, lo ! this mysterious being emerges from the tomb, and the apparent defeat is in reality a triumph. That which seemed a failure is success. The very opposition, ignominy, suffering and death, are to the Messiah the sources of his power. The wickedness of the world furnishes him with weapons with which he may make successful war upon wick-

edness. Every blow that fell upon him was an earthquake shock to the citadel of iniquity. Every insult was an assault upon the kingdom of darkness. Every mocking word that was uttered against him, foretold the downfall of the powers of sin.

Such was the consummate wisdom with which this drama was conducted, that it was made to bear with equal power upon the government above, and the rebels below. It satisfied the law, rendering it consistent for the Supreme Judge to pardon the penitent believer; and it was calculated, above all other means, to make a salutary moral impression upon mankind. Its apparent weakness constituted its strength. Its ignominy was the source of its glory. Christ crucified was "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The arm that quivered upon the cross upheld the moral government of the universe. The heart that bled was destined to send its pulsations through the human family, and affect all succeeding generations, down to the end of time.

But the wisdom of Christ can be fully developed and seen, only with the full development of this mighty scheme upon a wider and loftier field than this. When redemption shall have worked out its sublime results here, rolled from the earth the darkness and gloom of heathenism, lifted the nations from their degradation and moral debasement, and then

breaks forth, with still more glorious achievements, upon the plains of the celestial kingdom, then will the wisdom of Christ appear in its full perfection. It will be seen that, instead of destroying the law, he has fulfilled all its requisitions, and rendered it honorable. Instead of weakening the divine government, he has added to its strength and authority. He has furnished the most abundant evidence and the most impressive illustrations of the justice, as well as the mercy, of God. He has exalted the divine character in the estimation of all sentient creatures, and his great atoning sacrifice has served to consolidate the administration of Heaven, and has thrown a lustre and glory over the entire moral universe.

Another feature in Christ's glory, which will stand out with distinctness and prominence, will be *his power*. Besides his infinite love and boundless wisdom, the manifestations of his power will excite the admiration of the saints. "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, *with power*, and great glory." Indeed, seven hundred years before Christ's advent upon the earth, Isaiah prophesied, "His name shall be called the Mighty God." And a thousand years previous, David, in referring to his coming, after speaking of his beauty and eloquence as a king, exclaimed, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and

thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Upon this passage, Bishop Horne forcibly remarks, "The Messiah is, in these words, magnificently described, as making his progress among the nations, seated in his triumphal chariot, adorned with all the regal virtues, achieving the most astonishing victories, and, by the irresistible might of his power, subduing idolatry and iniquity to the faith and temper of the Gospel." The Psalmist continues, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." After describing his battles and victories, the Messiah is presented as seated upon a throne that shall endure forever, and as swaying a sceptre pledged to an administration of righteousness. St. John also refers to him as a conqueror: "I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." Just before his ascension, he said to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And in many passages of Scripture we find the attribute of omnipotence ascribed to him.

While he was upon the earth, his power was manifested in various ways. By his miracles he demonstrated his control over the elements and laws

of the physical world — over diseases and death. He also showed that the evil spirits were subject to his power, and that all the holy angels were under his authority. Behold him, calming the troubled sea, hushing the winds to rest, and walking upon the waves. Behold him, at one time, turning water into wine ; at another, feeding thousands with a few loaves and fishes ; at another, withering, by a word, a fig-tree. Behold him passing through Galilee, “healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.” Wherever he moves, “the blind receive their sight, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up.” So charged and impregnated is he with power, that there is healing virtue even in the hem of his garment. Nor are these the first manifestations of his omnipotence. St. John declares, that “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made.” The language of St. Paul, upon this point, in his epistle to the Colossians, is most decisive and unqualified. After speaking with enthusiastic eloquence of the efficacy of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, he says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before

all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church : who is the beginning, the first born from the dead : that in all things he might have the preëminence.”

Future events, also, are subject to the power of Christ. His word will startle the dead from their tombs : “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” The trumpet-peal will roll over the islands, and oceans, and continents of the earth. It will break the long silence of the tomb, be heard in the caverns of the deep, reverberate over the fields of battle, and summon the multitude, who have crowded this planet, to judgment. The work of judging the world, and of rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, will be performed by him. He is repeatedly represented, by the sacred writers, as seated upon his throne with all nations gathered before him, and rewarding each individual according to their deeds.

His power is also exhibited in other forms in the Scriptures. He is spoken of as “mighty to save,” as “able to succor them that are tempted,” as “able to save to the uttermost” all who may come to him and put their trust in him. In his conflicts with his enemies he is exhibited as subduing them, as treading them beneath his feet, as breaking them with a rod of iron, as dashing them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Thus, though with-

out the external marks of authority, — though he moved about as a servant among the princes of the earth, — though he was poor among the opulent, and a despised Nazarene among the proud and haughty Pharisees, — yet within his sacred breast slumbered a power that held a universe within its grasp; a power acknowledged by all ranks of spiritual existences, from the highest archangel down to the lowest of the fallen spirits. And when Christ shall appear in his exaltation, then will this attribute be seen in its full majesty and glory. All the inspired utterances that we have quoted will be luminous with new meaning. The saint will understand the import of the declaration “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” He will see that this power extends over every world and system, and through all ranks of intelligences. He will see that the authority of Christ is acknowledged by every holy being in the universe; and he will be ready to join in the ascription, “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.”

It will also serve to increase the admiration of the saints, as they gaze upon the Saviour’s glory, to learn by what gracious instrumentalities, and frequent manifestations of his power, he has carried

them safely through the temptations of life, and enabled them to reach their everlasting home.

Previous to Christ's departure from earth, he made to his followers the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He also assured them that he would send the Comforter, who would teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance, and forcibly impress upon their minds, the precious doctrines which he had taught them. The holy angels he sent forth "to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." Thus every heavenly agency was employed in promoting the sanctification of the church, and advancing believers in the divine life. God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, angels and archangels, are concentrating their influences upon the Christian, to spiritualize him, and fit him for the joys and duties of an immortal state; and were we to be suddenly endowed with powers of vision that would enable us to discern spiritual objects, we should behold multitudes of "ministering spirits," who were sympathizing with the saints in their trials and discouragements, engaging with them in their conflicts with sin, and aiding them in wrestling "against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world." We should behold the blessed Comforter strengthening the weak, sustaining the faint-hearted, and inciting all to

watchfulness, self-examination and prayer. An omnipotent Saviour would be seen entering his temple, the soul of the believer, seeking to purify its atmosphere, decorate its walls, strengthen its columns, quicken its devotion, and bring every thought, desire and purpose of the soul, to the altar, to receive consecration at his hands.

“Lo, I am with you alway.” What is the full import of these words? By what secret avenues does the Saviour gain access to our spirits? How does he touch the springs of action,—how does he excite holy desires, protect us from the adversary, incline our feet heavenward, “work in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure”? We know not now, but we shall know hereafter. And a knowledge of what has been done to promote our sanctification, a knowledge of the vast moral machinery that has been kept in motion to sustain our faith, suppress the risings of a sinful nature, preserve the supremacy of moral principle in the soul, and carry forward the work of a thorough spiritual renovation, will excite the highest gratitude and most intense admiration. The Christian will see that his pathway here was lined with invisible agencies, more potent than the highest visible means of grace; that he was instructed by more eloquent messengers than ever addressed him from the pulpit; that he was “surrounded with a great cloud of

witnesses," who watched with intense anxiety his progress, and stimulated him to "run with patience the race set before" him. He will see what solicitude and effort it has cost the "author and finisher of his faith" to perfect his sanctification, and fit him for his present exalted position, and rapturous joys.

"O, for a sight, a pleasing sight,
Of our Almighty Father's throne !
There sits our Saviour, crowned with light,
Clothed in a body like our own.

Adoring saints around him stand,
And thrones and powers before him fall ;
The God shines gracious through the man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all.

O, what amazing joys they feel,
While to their golden harps they sing,
And sit on every heavenly hill,
And spread the triumphs of their King !

When shall the day, dear Lord, appear,
That I shall mount to dwell above,
And stand and bow and worship there,
And view thy face, and sing and love? "

XI.

THE THRONE IN HEAVEN.

“I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” — REVELATION XX. 11.

OUR views of the heavenly world would be incomplete, unless we consider the moral government which God has established over his kingdom. This is presented to us, in the passage which we have quoted, under the emblem of “a great white throne.” The whiteness of the throne indicates, not only its purity, but its brilliancy. Yet the lustre is not so dazzling as to prevent the apostle from beholding the Being who is seated upon the throne. Aided by supernatural powers of vision, he sees Jehovah in his majesty, before whom the earth and the heavens flee away. Such is the intensity of his glory, that the universe is represented as dissolving before it, and the laws of nature as being suspended. Similar expressions are found in the Psalms of David, and in the writings of the prophets. At the appearance of Jehovah, the earth trembles, the mountains melt, the seas retire. “The mountains quake at him, the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his pres-

ence ; yea, the world, and all that dwell therein." The throne of Jehovah is often referred to, in the Scriptures, as the symbol of regal authority, and the seat of sovereign power. The Psalmist declares, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." The prophet Isaiah says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." Daniel, in describing the vision he had of the "Ancient of days," says, "His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. Thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

This emblem is referred to, with great frequency, by St. John. Indeed, as the panorama of heavenly glories passed before him, the throne was a bright and conspicuous object, in almost every scene that presented itself. When the first trumpet sounded, and "a door was opened in heaven," he perceived in the distance a throne, and one that sat thereon ; and, as the celestial vision was drawing to a close, and its brightness fading from the view, this was one of the last objects to sink and disappear below the horizon. At one time, it appeared encircled with a gorgeous rainbow, and lightnings and thunderrings proceeded out of it, and seven brilliant lamps threw their lustre upon it. At another time, he saw a golden altar before it, and the incense from

the censer of the angel ascended, and enveloped the throne. At another, it was surrounded with a sea of glass, and “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,” flowed from it; and the invitation was given, “Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” If the apostle hears “the voice of many angels,” they are around the throne. If he beholds, in another scene, a great multitude, stretching away as far as the eye can reach, they are “before the throne.”

An emblem thus conspicuous, and appearing as the central object in so many celestial views, must be full of important meaning. May we be aided by divine assistance in our endeavors to interpret it!

The fact, that the throne was constantly kept before the mind of the apostle, indicates the supremacy and perpetual authority of God’s moral government. It teaches mankind that this government should occupy a prominent place in their estimation; that its principles should be the object of frequent meditation, and careful study; and that, amid the most glowing anticipations of heavenly felicity, the Christian should never forget that he owes allegiance to an infinite Sovereign, and is under laws that require of him perfect obedience.

The origin, nature, extent and glory, of this government, are points worthy of our consideration.

A supreme moral government grows, naturally,

out of the existence and character of God, and the nature of his moral kingdom. The primary conception, in the human mind, of the Deity, is that of a being who has power over his works, and authority over his creatures. To suppose a Supreme Being to create matter or mind, without inherent laws to govern them, or without the purpose to subject them to his authority, is to invalidate our essential ideas of God. Besides, the creation of an intelligent being, without principles of action, would subserve no good purpose,—no more than the creation of worlds, or a material universe, without physical laws. Indeed, we can no more conceive of a reasonable being, without law, than we can conceive of a sun without light, or an atmosphere without oxygen, or a planetary system without the principle of gravitation. Those, therefore, who come to God, believing that “he is,” must also believe “that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;” that he has established over his sentient creation a moral government, involving a system of rewards and punishments; and that he has so ordered his administration that rich blessings shall flow from obedience, and disastrous consequences follow a course of disobedience.

This government grows, too, out of the infinite and perfect attributes of the Deity. It flows from him, as the pure river of the water of life flows

from his throne. Every perfection of his nature contributes to its purity and excellence. His boundless goodness prompts him to frame a government best suited to the wants of his subjects, and adapted to secure their highest happiness. His infinite wisdom enables him to make such a selection of laws, and so arrange the forces and influences of his government, as to attain, in the most perfect manner, the ends of his administration. Had we the ability to go beyond the external and visible features of this government, and penetrate into its hidden and complicated machinery, and perceive the workings of the influences and motives which are employed to develop and control the energies of its subjects, we should see that divine wisdom was stamped upon every part of the system. We should see that, whatever imperfection or disorder may have crept into certain portions of God's vast empire, his government was adapted *and designed* to secure the perfect holiness and happiness of every sentient being in the universe. This, in my view, is a fundamental truth, which is not to be disturbed, and need not, if we are honest, be disturbed, by any speculations or theories that we may entertain upon other points, connected with, or growing out of, this moral government. When the infinite Jehovah, with the solemnity of an oath, declares, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," I listen as a

believer in the truth of the declaration, and in the sincerity of its author. And when I view the wise adaptation of God's government to his moral kingdom, I feel the force of the inquiry, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

The infinite knowledge of Jehovah qualifies him to administer this government to the best advantage, and with reference to the interests of all ranks of intelligent beings. Having spread out before him the character, history, position and circumstances, of every individual subject; possessing the faculty of attending, at the same time, to the interests of a world, and the wants of the humblest of his creatures; capable of grasping, at a glance, everything that is transpiring in the millions of worlds that float around his throne; capable of reading the thoughts, and scanning the motives, of every mind, — he is prepared, as no other being in the universe is, to administer a moral government. His government, therefore, exists as an absolute necessity. We cannot contemplate it, in its connection with a single divine attribute, without having it forced upon us, as essential to the very existence of a moral kingdom. Let it be crushed, and the moral universe must be crushed with it. The two stand or fall together.

We do not wonder, therefore, that, in the visions that passed before the apostle John, a throne should

have been so often seen. We do not wonder that, in the revelations that the Deity made of himself to the ancient prophets, he should so often appear surrounded with the splendors of royalty, and the emblems of absolute sovereignty.

The divine holiness is another attribute from which a moral government springs. God's sense of right and justice prompts him to establish these principles over his creatures. If his subjects are made in his likeness and image, they must be governed by the laws that govern him. As a holy being, he cannot approve of anything but holiness in his kingdom. He cannot, either, avoid doing all in his power to secure universal holiness. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose that he can act against the dictates of his own nature, and in violation of a principle that is dearer to him than the universe. It is true that evil exists under this government; but this is a foreign and antagonistic element, against which the whole force of the administration is arrayed. To affirm, as some writers have done, that sin is necessary to the system, or in any manner receives the divine approbation, is to insult the Deity, and throw into inexplicable confusion all our moral conceptions. Against such an idea the human reason and the divine revelation utter their solemn and unqualified protest. The divine will is fully expressed in this law: "Thou shalt love the Lord

thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” And this law is binding, and always was, and ever will be, upon every individual subject. It has never been repealed, or qualified, or suspended; and it never will be, while God remains a holy being. Every instance of its violation dishonors God, weakens the government, and entails upon the transgressor, and upon all who come under his influence, disastrous consequences.

Our next inquiry respects the nature of this government. It is styled a moral government, because it is a system established by a moral governor over moral subjects. It respects the actions of free agents, and aims at controlling them by the power of motives. Physical force cannot enter into it, for the obvious reason that its subjects are by nature susceptible only to the power of moral influences. The physical universe is so constituted as to be governed by physical laws, and by no others. The revolution of the planets could be no more produced by moral influence, or simple authority, than the obedience of a free agent could be secured by physical force. In the material, animal and moral kingdoms of God, each department is governed by laws adapted to the nature of the subject. The animal creation are governed by the laws of instinct, and hence are not capable of moral action, nor susceptible to the power of influence. But intelligent beings,

made in the image and likeness of God, endowed with the powers of reason, judgment and free action, must be under a moral system. They must be governed by the influence of divine authority, acting, through the susceptibilities and reason, upon the will. The idea of a forced obedience is an absurdity. Holiness of character produced by omnipotence is, in the very nature of things, an impossibility. Obedience is the voluntary action of a free agent. The homage, worship and services, that are rendered in heaven, by the saints and angels, are all the voluntary offerings of loyal subjects. They are the expressions of gratitude and love, awakened by a view of the excellences of the divine character, and an experience of the divine love; and their virtue consists in their being voluntarily rendered to the Author of all good. Beings that are not capable of volition, that have not the power of choice, are not capable of rendering worship.

Such, then, was the government that was symbolized in “the great white throne” that appeared before St. John, — a government suited to the nature of intelligent moral beings, and adapted to secure their highest and lasting happiness. And in this vision we are presented with the sublime spectacle of vast multitudes of holy and resplendent beings, surrounding the throne, and freely rendering to the “King of kings and Lord of lords” the enthusiastic homage

of grateful and loyal hearts. They are held in allegiance to that throne by the power of benevolence. The divine love manifested towards them draws out their love towards the Sovereign, and every affection of their heart becomes a tie that binds them to him. And this privilege, of rendering to the infinite Jehovah voluntary worship and services, will not only contribute to the glory of the Sovereign, but will be a prominent source of the felicity of the saints. It will be a living and perpetual fountain of blessedness : a fountain increasing with the development of our being, and with the growth of our capabilities to love and serve God ; a fountain that will not only send forth streams, but will swell into an ocean of happiness.

This government, while it is thus adapted to the nature of its subjects, is entirely independent of them. In this respect, it differs from all human governments, which, to a greater or less extent, are derived from the consent of the governed. It is an absolute and unlimited sovereignty, all the elements, principles and laws of which, have come directly from the Deity. The creature has no more contributed to its excellence and glory, than he has contributed to the essence of God. It is as much above the skill and wisdom of finite beings, as the Creator is above the creature. It stands out alone, a vast moral system, bearing the impress of divine wisdom and goodness.

It is an embodiment of the eternal principles of right, justice and holiness, — principles that have dwelt forever in the divine mind. God had before him every possible form of government that could be established ; and he selected this, not only as the best, but as the only perfect government that could be framed. Its independence, therefore, is an absolute necessity. The governor could no more have consulted his subjects as to the kind of government that he should establish over them, than he could have consulted them as to whether they would have a sun in the heavens. From his very nature, and his relations to his creatures, he must give laws, and not receive them ; must establish principles, and not derive them from any external source. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him ? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding ? All nations before him are as nothing ; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.” The Deity can be the recipient of nothing from without, for the whole universe is but the manifestation of himself. He has written his omnipotence upon the stars, and his wisdom upon the movements of planetary systems, and the forces and laws of nature. He has created light as the symbol of his love, and

spread out the ocean as the emblem of his infinity. Yet all that is visible and known to us is but a faint expression of Him who is seated upon the throne of the universe. From regions far beyond the stars, there comes to us a voice, "Who by searching can find out God; who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

"Where art Thou? THOU! source and support of all
That is, or seen, or felt; thyself unseen,
Unfelt, unknown, — alas! unknowable!
I look abroad among thy works, — the sky,
Vast, distant, glorious with its world of suns,
Life-giving earth, and ever-moving main,
And speaking winds, — and ask if these are Thee!
The stars that twinkle on, the eternal hills,
The restless tide's outgoing and return,
The omnipresent and deep-breathing air,
Though hailed as gods of old, and only less,
Are not the Power I seek; — are thine, not Thee!"

Such a being must be a sovereign of absolute and unlimited authority. By virtue of his divinity, he has the right to make laws for all his creatures. Yet this sovereignty is not, as we have seen, a tyranny. It has not been established to gratify the mere love of power. It is not administered, as many human governments are, on the principle of sacrificing every interest to the arbitrary will of the despot. It exists for the happiness of the subject, as well as the glory of the Ruler. We cannot examine one of its elements, or principles,

without perceiving its benevolent design. The divine goodness is as conspicuous in it as the divine sovereignty. Indeed, the sovereignty in the government is the executive power that gives efficacy to the goodness. A finite being might, in his compassion, desire the welfare of others, without having the power to secure it. But God, by virtue of the attribute of sovereignty, is enabled to accomplish his wishes in regard to the happiness of his obedient subjects. He is not only a being "gracious and full of compassion," but "he doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

In the series of views that we have presented, in this volume, of the blessedness of heaven, we have abundant proof of the beneficial results of the combined action of the divine sovereignty and goodness. We see them in the preparations that are made for the saints; in the rewards that are promised to the faithful; and in the glories and honors that the holy angels have for ages enjoyed. As we look down the long vista of an immortal state, they crowd upon the vision, inspiring confidence as well as hope; giving us the assurance that the great Ruler "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Our definition of the nature of this government

would be incomplete, without remarking that it is a system of laws to which are attached severe penalties. The throne which appeared to the apostle John was surrounded not only with the emblems of the purity and love of the Deity, but also with the symbols of his justice. Thunderings and lightnings were seen to proceed from the throne. And the apostle adds, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in those books, according to their works; and whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." It has not fallen within the scope of the topics which we have been considering, to refer, except incidentally, to the condition of those who pass from this world in a state of impenitence and unbelief; and we would gladly have confined our thoughts to the bright visions of the future life which are found in the Holy Scriptures. But, in contemplating that stupendous moral government which the infinite Jehovah has established, we cannot avoid seeing its dreadful penalty. In viewing God as the sovereign of the universe, we cannot fail to perceive that "clouds and darkness are round about him;" that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Being himself a God of strict justice and perfect holiness, he must punish the wicked, as

well as reward the righteous. And fearful as is the penalty with which the transgressor of his law is threatened, we affirm that it is as fully sustained by the divine benevolence as by the divine justice. For the Deity, as a benevolent being, as a ruler who is anxious to secure the greatest amount of obedience and happiness in his kingdom, is called upon to make the most emphatic manifestation of his abhorrence of sin that it is possible to make. He is called upon to show to his moral universe the absolute supremacy of his authority, his rightful claims to the services and affections of every subject, and his entire disapprobation of every form and degree of sin. He must therefore attach to the transgression of his law a penalty, that will carry with it the greatest possible moral influence. Any penalty that is limited or finite obviously fails to do this. And should God fail to express, in the strongest manner, his hatred of sin,—should he fail to present to his subjects the strongest motives to induce them to obey him,—how could we prove his infinite benevolence?

It is true, that the punishment announced in the Scriptures against the wicked is in the highest degree terrible. The mere thought of an immortal spirit lost forever is inconceivably awful. But it should be remembered that the sin against which this penalty is threatened is a terrible evil,

an infinite evil, an evil that threatens the overthrow of God's government, the annihilation of his authority, and the destruction of his moral universe. It is a foe, which, if allowed to exert its full force, and send out all its destructive influences, would defeat the benevolent designs of God, and involve the whole universe in one general ruin. This evil must, therefore, from the very necessity of the case, be held in check by the strongest barriers that omnipotence can raise. It must be crushed by the most potent forces that can be brought against it. The honor of God, the stability of his government, and the interests of his obedient subjects, demand this. Every man feels the importance, in human governments, of maintaining the majesty of law, and punishing transgressors. The welfare of society, the authority of the government, and a just regard to the rights of the innocent, require it. Now, if this must be done in limited and local communities, and where only temporal affairs and interests are involved, how much more necessary is it that the authority of God's government be sustained,—a government that extends over millions of worlds, and that embraces within its sway the thoughts, motives and deeds, of countless myriads of subjects!

In this connection, the inquiry presses itself upon our attention, If there is so much sin in that portion

of God's kingdom with which we are acquainted, notwithstanding the severity of the penalty of the law, what would be the effect, were the penalty removed? Suppose, for a moment, that there were no restraining influences arising from the fear of the evil consequences of disobedience, have we not reason to believe, from the present moral condition of mankind, that wickedness would greatly increase, and the authority of God be, to a greater extent than it now is, set at defiance? We have given prominence, in the views already advanced, to the power of the divine love; but we would not overlook the fact, that there is such a principle as divine justice. We may delight ourselves with the contemplation of the beauties and glories of the heavenly world, but we would not keep out of sight the great truth, that "justice and judgment are the habitation" of God's throne.

The next point deserving of our attention is the extent of the divine government. Reason and revelation both teach us that God's authority is coëxtensive with his sentient creation. It reaches to the remotest bounds of the habitable universe. Every angel in heaven, every inhabitant of earth, the millions of beings that people the worlds that are above and around us, are all subjects of the divine authority. "His kingdom ruleth over all." Every human mind is conscious that it is subject to the requisitions of

law. This consciousness it cannot shake off. It is a part of its nature. It is as indestructible as its own being. The sense of right and wrong that is planted in every breast, the obligation under which one feels to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience, the self-approbation that flows from right conduct, and the remorse that the transgressor experiences, all spring from this government. If a person follows a vicious course of conduct, it is not necessary to bring him to a formal trial, in order that the ends of justice may be attained. He is arrested by his own conscience, is summoned before a judge within his own breast, is tried by a jury impaneled from his sense of right and justice, and condemned to the loss of peace of mind and the favor of Heaven. And reason teaches us that the power of this internal, self-working government, is felt by every intelligent being in the universe. No angel is so exalted as to be beyond its influence, and no being has fallen so low as to have had its lineaments effaced from his memory. The principle termed conscience, which is planted in every soul, is the viceroy of heaven's King, appointed to guide the subject in the path of duty, to warn him of danger, and to enable him to secure the high rewards that are promised to the obedient.

We speak of this government as coëxtensive with God's moral kingdom ; but this language, obviously,

fails to convey to our minds adequate conceptions either of the government or of the kingdom over which it is established ; for modern science has thrown open to us an extent of empire that is beyond the grasp of the mightiest and loftiest of human intellects. With the aid of telescopic power, we discover that immensity is crowded with worlds and systems, of which, before, we had no knowledge ; and that this earth, instead of being a central and important portion of God's dominions, to which all that is visible in the heavens is tributary and secondary, is, in fact, but one amid myriads of worlds, that vastly surpass it in magnificence and splendor. We discover that the universe is of such an extent that this world, with its islands, continents and oceans, is but a speck in the view of beings at comparatively no remote distance from us ; — a speck, the loss of which would be no more felt than the fall of a leaf in a vast forest, or the removal of a single grain of sand from the sea-shore. In our attempts to comprehend the extent of this empire, we are not only utterly baffled, but we perceive it stretching away, in every direction, towards a mysterious infinity ; and the impression is made upon the mind, that it is absolutely boundless. The idea has been advanced, that it may be the Creator's design to excite the wonder, and sustain the adoration, of his subjects, by views of the magnitude of a kingdom the boundaries of which no

finite mind will ever reach. An eloquent writer* has said that there is “an unscaled barrier, beyond which no power, either of eye or of telescope, shall ever carry us; that, on the other side, there is a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to which the whole of this concave and visible firmament dwindle into the insignificance of an atom; and though all which the mind of man can take in, or his fancy grasp at, were swept away, there might still remain as ample a field, over which the Divinity might expatiate, and which he might have peopled with innumerable worlds. Though this earth were to be burned up, though the trumpet of its dissolution were sounded, though yon sky were to pass away as a scroll, and every visible glory which the finger of Divinity has inscribed on it were to be put out forever, — an event so awful to us, and to every world in our vicinity, by which so many suns would be extinguished, and so many varied scenes of life and of population would rush into forgetfulness, — what is it in the high scale of the Almighty’s workmanship? — a mere shred, which, though scattered into nothing, would leave the universe of God one entire scene of greatness and of majesty.”

If such is the immensity of the Creator’s dominions, — an immensity so vast that the solitude created by the destruction of all that is visible would be but “a

* Chalmers.

small, unoccupied point," to the infinite mind, — if the nebulae consist of clusters of stars, and those stars swell to the magnitude of brilliant suns, and those suns present themselves to our view as the central orbs of vast planetary systems, that are filled with a busy and innumerable population, — what must be the grandeur of that divine government, that spreads its protecting shield over so vast an empire, and requires the homage and services of the countless myriads of its inhabitants! What must be the attributes of that monarch, who, while presiding over such a kingdom, and taking within his comprehensive grasp the interests of various ranks of intelligences, as numerous, perhaps, as the worlds around us, at the same time can notice every thought that enters my mind, every motive that influences my conduct, and every circumstance that contributes to form my character, and decide my destiny! We gaze with wonder and admiration upon a government that, while its sway is universal, at the same time finds its reflex in the consciousness of every individual subject; a government the grandeurs of which baffle our powers, and yet the workings of which are discoverable in the moral history of the humblest of its subjects.

An administration thus universal, and embodying the eternal principles of right, justice and benevolence, must be in the highest degree powerful and

glorious. Although no physical forces can enter into its operations, yet it has a moral power, a divine energy, that is felt in every part of the habitable universe. All the influence of the divine character, and the force of the divine authority, are infused into it, and are among its constituent elements. It is penetrated and permeated by the infinite attributes of the Deity, and must partake of the power that belongs to God. It is a revelation and embodiment of the moral qualities of the Deity, just as the material universe is a revelation and embodiment of the divine omnipotence.

Its chief force is derived directly from the character of its author. To aid us in conceiving of the moral power of the Supreme Intelligence, we need only reflect upon the capabilities for exerting influence with which even his finite creatures are endowed. Every human being is so constituted that he cannot fail to send forth an influence. While he is a focus towards which the power from all other beings converges, there emanates from him a moral force that reaches, for aught we can tell, the utmost boundaries of social existence. Though man is finite and dependent, — the creature of yesterday, — still, he cannot isolate himself. The power inherent in his being streams forth from him, as light pours from the sun, or heat from the internal fire of the earth. He is, in one sense, a sovereign who cannot abdicate. He

is a force for evil or good, in the moral universe, which cannot be annihilated. Every action that he performs lives, — becomes an imperishable monument. Every word he utters goes forth as a winged messenger, upon an immortal mission. Every thought leaves an indelible impression upon the universe. In remarking upon this subject, a distinguished writer says, “It is as if each man had his foot upon the point where ten thousand telegraphic wires meet from every part of the universe, and he were able with each volition to send abroad an influence along these wires, so as to reach every created being in heaven and in earth. It is as if we were linked to every created being by a golden chain, and every pulsation of our heart, or movement of our mind, modified the pulsation of every other heart, and the movements of every other intellect.”

Now, if such be the power of a creature, what must be the power of an infinite Creator? If such are the relations that finite beings sustain to each other, and the force that they necessarily exert one upon another, — if there are lines of influence passing between them, as rays of light pass from star to star, or sun to sun, intersecting each other at almost every point, — what must be the moral power that flows from the Creator to his creatures — from him in whom “we live and move and have our being”? United as we are to the moral Governor of the uni-

verse by ten thousand ties ; dependent upon him for every benefit that we receive, our obligations increasing with every new manifestation of his kindness, and every day's experience of his love, we cannot but feel the influence of his character, and perceive the mighty moral forces that are inherent in his government. And as, from age to age, blessings continue to flow from his administration, its power must continue to increase ; and since the period can never arrive when the creature will cease to be dependent upon the bounty of the Creator, it follows that the moral power of this government will never cease to increase. It must continue to augment throughout eternity.

But who can describe, or even conceive of the glory of this divine government, that throws its lustre upon every world, and fills immensity with its splendors ? When its grand purposes shall have been accomplished, the sublime spectacle will be presented of a universe crowded with loyal and adoring subjects. From every world will ascend, to the infinite Sovereign, anthems of praise, and the incense of holy worship. Every planet will glitter with temples, whose lofty architecture, and splendid proportions, and costly decorations, will indicate the prevalence of devotion, and the homage that is rendered to the divine authority.

And if we are so happy as to reach the heavenly

world, the first object upon which the eye will rest will be “the great white throne.” And as we advance from one stage of progress to another, and new scenes open before the mind, this throne will appear, as it did to the apostle John, rising in its splendor, conspicuous above every other object. Wherever we may wander, in whatever duties we may be engaged, or whatever studies or pleasures may occupy us, we shall never lose sight of the throne. It will stand forever, to remind us that we are under authority, — that amid our greatest enjoyments and highest honors, we yet owe allegiance to an infinite Sovereign, and are subject to the laws of him whose “dominion is an everlasting dominion.” It will stand as the eternal bulwark of the holiness and happiness of God’s empire, and the pledge that the rewards of heaven are immortal!

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